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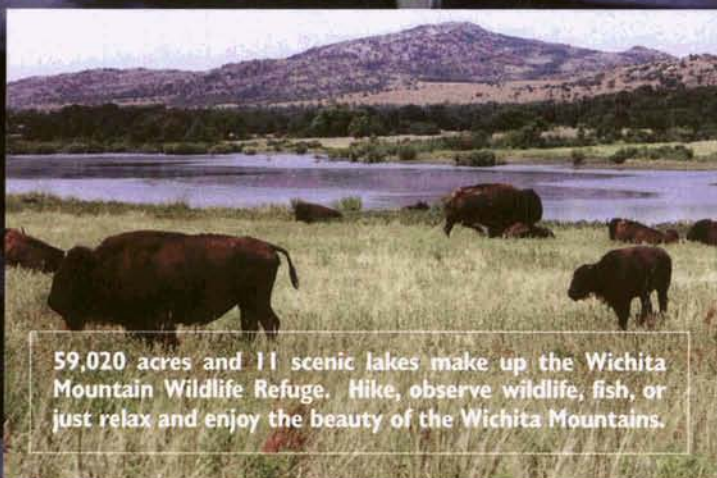
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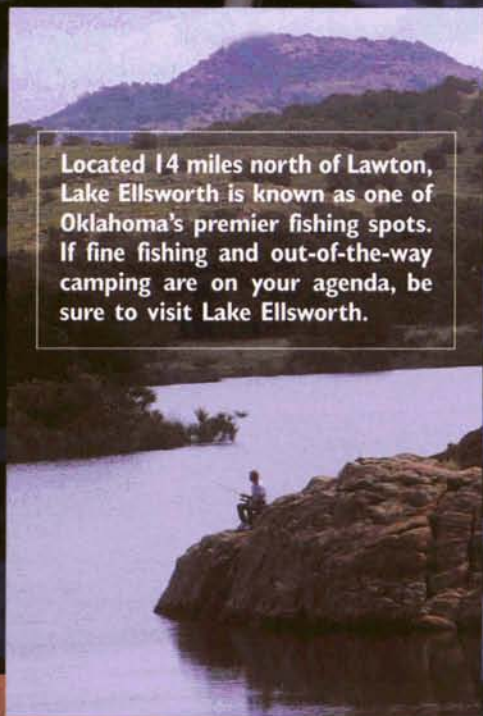


"Freedom means the opportunity to be what we never thought we would be." —**Daniel J. Boorstin**

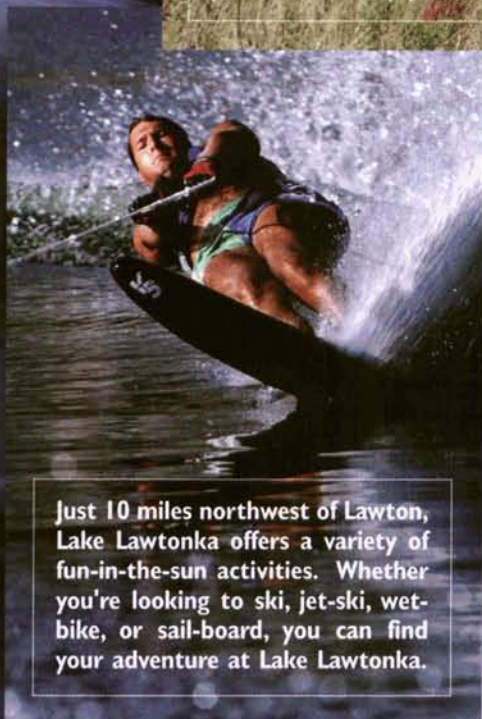
jump in the water's fine!



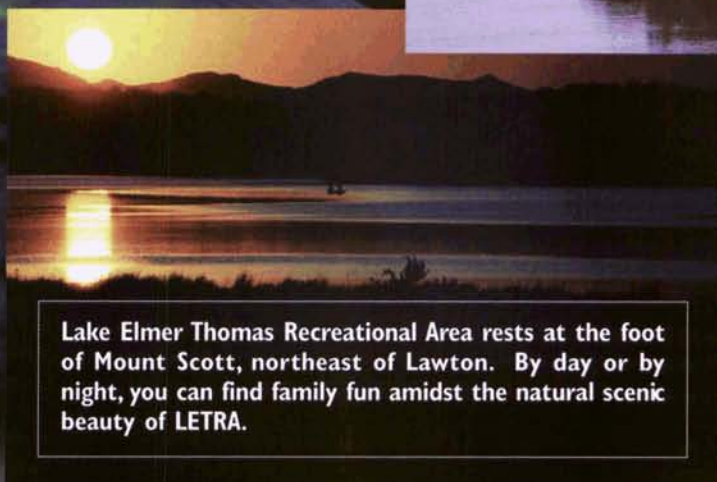
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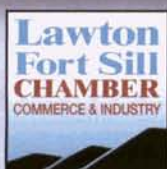
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A man with a mustache, wearing a red beanie and a blue work shirt, is sitting on a large, dark metal casting in a foundry. He is looking off to the side with a slight smile. The background is filled with industrial equipment, including a large fan and various metal structures.

MEET OKLAHOMA.

His name is Gerald Littlefield. 52 years old. Married, two kids, three grandkids. Blackpowder hunter. Crappie fisherman. Cattle rancher. A foundryman for 27 years at MidAmerica Industrial Park.

Gerald is just one part of Oklahoma's most treasured resource: our people. Those men and women that make our state great. Individuals that exemplify our native strengths of tenacity, integrity, and ingenuity.

Like many other economic development organizations in Oklahoma, we are tasked with recruiting new industries to our state. It's a complex and difficult job trying to convince a business to locate their operations here. But, it becomes a whole lot easier when they meet someone like Gerald.

MidAmerica
OKLAHOMA'S LARGEST INDUSTRIAL PARK

Mid-American Castings Corporation is one of over 65 firms operating at MidAmerica. For more information about us, please visit: www.maip.com.

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Today

JULY • AUGUST 2003
VOLUME 53 • NUMBER 4

FEATURES

The Land We Love 30

Sweeping plains, jagged rock formations, and breathtaking sunsets. Oklahoma's natural beauty offers relief and nostalgia. Take a voyage back to childhood memories while enjoying a photographic glimpse of always-inspiring native landscapes. BY JIM TOLBERT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY YOUSEF KHANFAR

Within These Walls 34

More than eight years have passed since the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. Thanks to the Oklahoma City National Memorial Center Museum, we will never forget. BY STEFFIE CORCORAN

18 Outdoor Dining Favorites 42

It's easy to enjoy a meal with the one you love when the ambiance comes free of charge. Our eighteen picks for superior outdoor dining statewide. BY BROOKE DEMETZ

Alone in the Reaches 44

The bad boys of the woods don't stand a chance against Oklahoma's game wardens. Peek into the world of crimes against nature and jump onboard this journey with the state's wildlife cops. BY CHAD LOVE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM LUKER

Bozena's 52

No need to renew your passport. Zbigniew and Bozena Niebieszczanski serve up their native Polish cuisine and old European hospitality close to home at Bozena's in Fort Gibson. BY SHAUNA LAWYER STRUBY

DEPARTMENTS

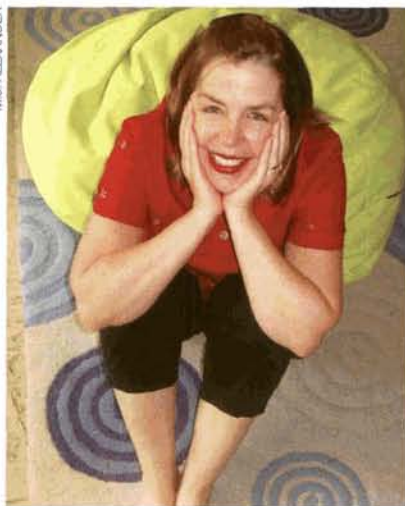
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On the cover: This flag was displayed atop the crane used in the rescue and recovery efforts after the Oklahoma City bombing. Courtesy of Fitzgerald & Associates. This page: On patrol with Oklahoma's game wardens. Photograph by Tom Luker.

CONTRIBUTORS

Freelance writing—and living in Oklahoma—gives **Shauna Lawyer Struby** plenty of opportunities to explore the state's diversity. "In Oklahoma, we're blessed with so many pockets of undiscovered creativity, it makes living here an ongoing cultural adventure," she says. Her profile of Bozena Polish Restaurant (page 52) is a case in point. Struby also wrote this issue's Marketplace ("Art History," page 12), featuring artist Randy Powers' Graffiti Bridge products. In 2001, Struby served as editor for Pam Fleischaker's book *American Woman: Lost and Found in Oklahoma* (Full Circle Press). She and her husband Jim live in Oklahoma City with son Scott and daughter Calista.

M.J. ALEXANDER



J.R. HEINLY



Managing subscription files, handling office payroll, processing those highly prized invoices, and providing phone support are a few of *Oklahoma Today* office manager **Kathy Fugate's** primary responsibilities. "Making everyone happy is one of my favorite job duties," she says. Fugate, a Florida native, says, "As my first temporary assignment after moving to Oklahoma in 2001, working for the magazine turned into the best job I've ever had and has been instrumental in fostering appreciation for my adopted state." A dedicated crafter and Trekker who frequently bakes goodies for her coworkers, Fugate lives in Oklahoma City.

Located on the first floor of 50 Penn Place in Oklahoma City, **Jim Tolbert's** Full Circle Bookstore is a haven for bibliophiles of all walks. Readers of Tolbert's Full Circle newsletter, "Ladders & Fireplaces," have long enjoyed his insightful column. Now, in his first piece for *Oklahoma Today*, he reaches a broader audience with an essay entitled "The Land We Love" (page 30), which describes his family's deep Oklahoma roots against the backdrop of Yousef Khanfar's landscape photography. The civic-minded Tolbert, instrumental in Bricktown's early development, also was considered the "godfather" of the Myriad Gardens. He and his wife Beth, who live in Oklahoma City, have four children and seven grandchildren.



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Official Magazine of the
State of Oklahoma

Today

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2003 Oklahoma SPJ First Place, Feature Writing;
2002 IRMA Gold for Best Profile;
Sierra Club 2001 Conservation Journalism Award;
Three Dallas Press Club 2001 First Prize Honors;
IRMA Magazine of the Year, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996;
1999 Folio Editorial Excellence Award; 1998 Wilbur Award

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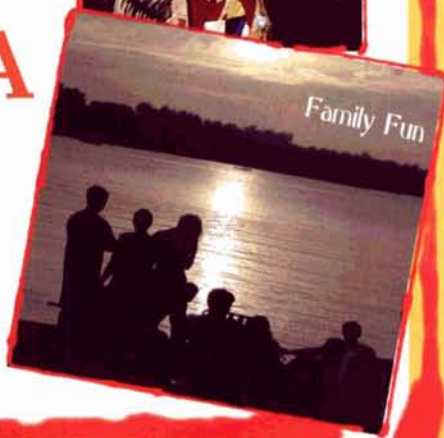
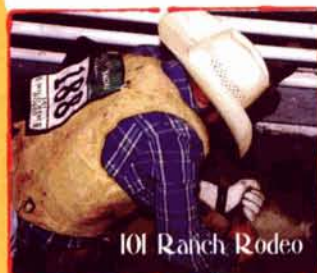
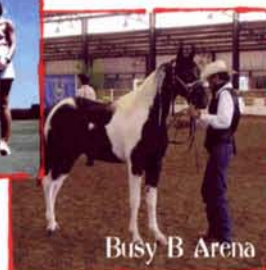
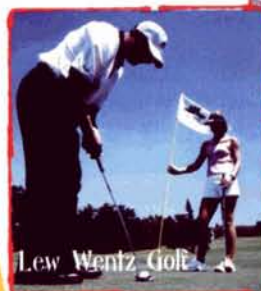
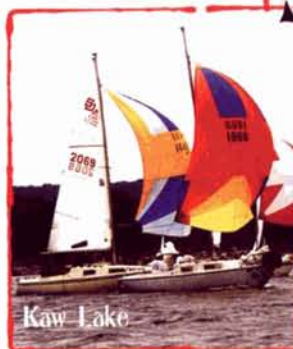
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HOT

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SUMMER FUN!



July 3
Independence Day Tribute - Ponca Theatre

July 4
Freedom Festival (Free Event) - Lake Ponca
FEATURING: TY ENGLAND,
OK Sky Divers, Jet Ski Champion Kyle Trotter,
Volleyball, USO Show, Military Fly-Overs,
Giant Inflatables, Fireworks & so much More!

July 5
Fly-In Breakfast - Ponca City Airport

July 12
16th Annual Airshow - GOOF's Field

July 18 - 19
2003 Southern Classic Horse Show,
Missouri Fox Trotters Assoc. - Busy B Arena

July 30 - August 3
Grand National Moto-Cross Races,
AMBUC Raceway

July 31 - August 2
Crazy Days - Citywide

August 6
Fly-In Breakfast - Ponca City Airport

August 13 - 16
101 Ranch Wild West Rodeo,
101 Ranch Rodeo Grounds

August 16
101 Ranch Wild West Rodeo Parade,
Downtown

August 28 - 31
127th Annual Ponca Pow Wow,
White Eagle Park

...in
PONCA City

See why we draw a crowd!



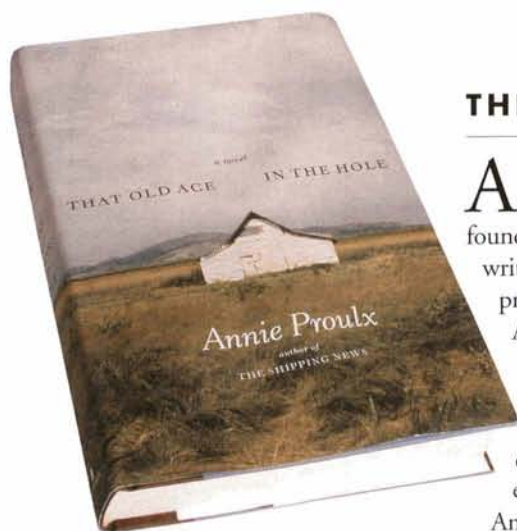
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While in town Visit: Marland's Grand Home - Pioneer Woman - Standing Bear - Marland Mansion - Ponca City Art Center - Ponca City Library - Kaw Lake - Lake Ponca.

"I suggest that what we want to do is not to leave to posterity a great institution, but to leave behind a great tradition of journalism ably practiced in our time." —Henry Luce, founder of *Time* and *Life*

Editor's Letter

JOHN JERNIGAN



THE TRUMP CARD

ANNIE PROULX IS ONE OF THOSE FEW AMERICAN NOVELISTS WHO PERMANENTLY resides in the big time. She lives a quiet writer's life in Wyoming and Newfoundland, commands hundreds of thousands per book, and has a resumé any seasoned writer would unabashedly covet. Her introductions include phrases such as "Pulitzer-prize winning" and "recipient of the National Book Award and National Magazine Award." She is, in a word, there.

Imagine our surprise when we discovered that Proulx, in her latest book, *That Old Ace in the Hole* (Scribner, 2002), mentions *Oklahoma Today*. Twice.

On page 26: "I figure if we can interest *Oklahoma Today*, get them to come out and do an article on us, we'd improve business about fifty percent," says a general store owner in the far western Oklahoma Panhandle.

And on page 69: "I'm writing a profile for a magazine," says the novel's protagonist, Bob Dollar. "What magazine is that?" asks LaVon Fronk, a local ranch widow.

"Ah, I haven't got one lined up yet. I thought I'd write the article first and then send it to a magazine. Maybe *Oklahoma Today*," says Dollar.

"I don't think so, Mr. Dollar. Strange as it may seem, *Oklahoma Today* specializes in Oklahoma stories.... And that's not how you get a article in a magazine. People get assignments."

In her fictional account of a very real publication, she has it right on the money. *Oklahoma Today* does specialize in Oklahoma. For forty-seven years now, we have been the lone general interest consumer magazine covering the 69,900 square miles within our borders.

Our articles are the real deal, assigned for their authenticity and relevance, and our staff is charged with bringing readers the very best product issue after issue. That means weighing each query, each pitch, and each idea carefully. Our readers trust our bimonthly content because it is based on merit, not muscle-flexing, value rather than favoritism.

Oklahoma Today stories are not dictated by advertisers, and fortunately these important supporters realize the value of this—their ads reach a focused, intelligent, and devoted readership who loves all things Oklahoma. The advertiser only wins in this unfettered and protected setting.

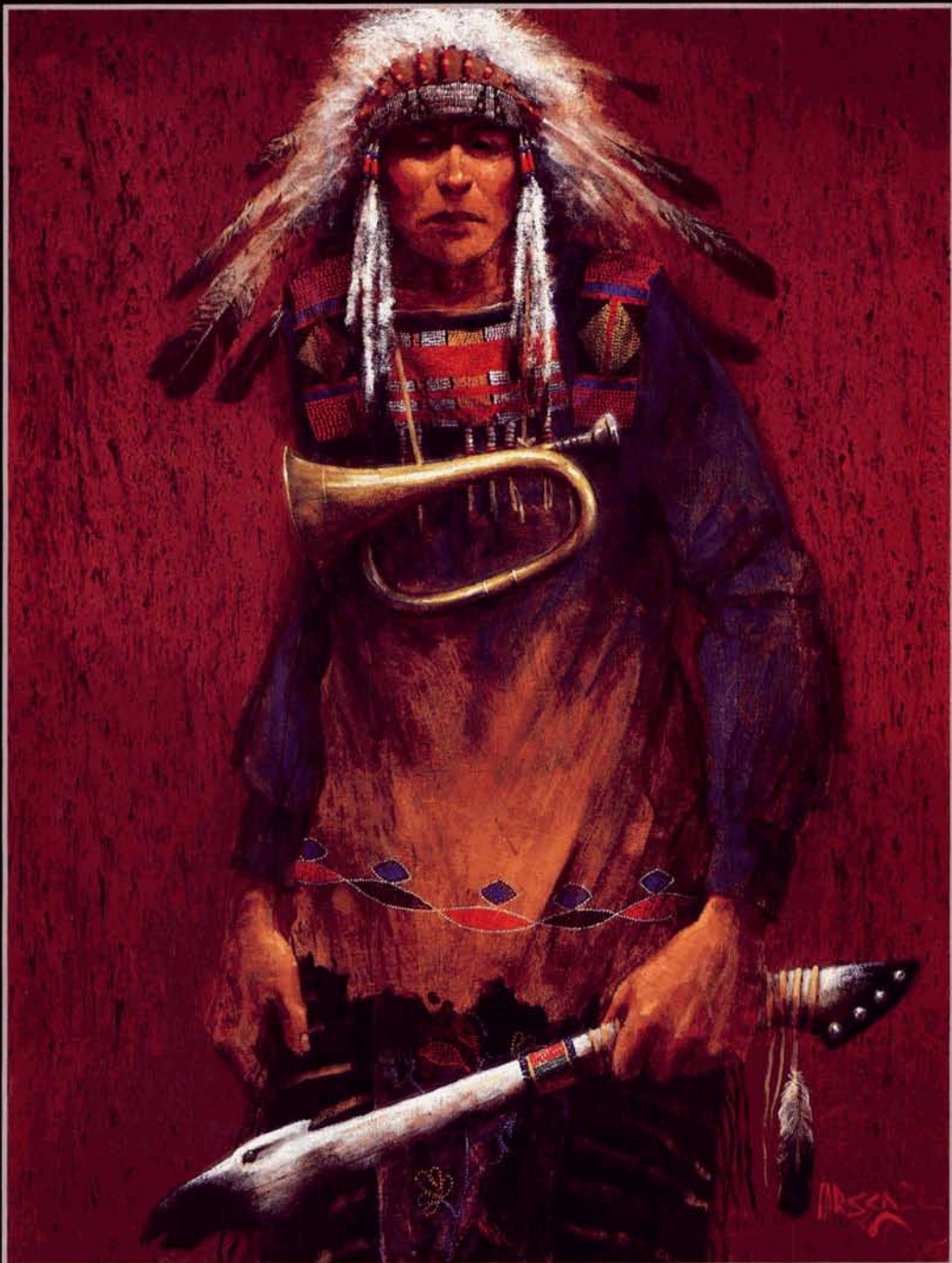
In 2002, according to the National Directory of Magazines, there were 17,321 magazines in the American consumer marketplace, another 8,296 trade publications specializing in everything from accounting to zoology, and only one created especially for Oklahomans. This, folks, is your magazine. Because of this simple but important understanding, *Oklahoma Today* is responsible to its readers, and we believe its audience responds with an unprecedented dedication. One measure of proof? *Oklahoma Today's* subscription renewal rates are twice the national average. But that's not always enough.

While industry analysts bearishly predict a silver lining for magazine publishers, the media recession isn't over yet. That means we need our loyalists to promote this publication, letting colleagues, family, and legislators know that it's meaningful to your life. To keep your magazine—the one among thousands that represents you—healthy and robust, we need you, in a word, there. Our readers are our ace in the hole. They have to be.

Laura McCune
mccune@OKLAHOMA
Today.com

SPEAK YOUR MIND

In conjunction with the Magazine Publishers of America's "Magazines Make a Difference" campaign, we want to hear about your experiences with *Oklahoma Today*. We're looking for specific feedback about how the magazine has impacted your life, your business, and your family. Has *Oklahoma Today* changed your feelings about the state? Teachers, do you use the magazine in the classrooms? Parents, trying to lure your children back home? Let us know. Please mail or email your responses to Joan Henderson/Magazines Make a Difference, 15 North Robinson, Suite 100, Oklahoma City, OK, 73103 or joan@oklahomatoday.com.



Song of White Bear

Limited Edition of 500

Larsen

Now available as a limited edition fine art print, Mike Larsen's *Song of White Bear*, from the *Oklahoma—An Honoring* series. This powerful 22" x 30" image is printed on heavy paper stock with an exterior dimension of 26" x 35". \$165 signed, \$95 unsigned.

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FeedBack

Partners in Kind

You will never know my delight in reading your Editor's Letter in the May/June 2003 edition of *Oklahoma Today* ("Win Win").

As a trustee of the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority and a longtime admirer of—and subscriber to—your publication, I applaud any effort toward a partnership involving Oklahoma's two most credible journalistic entities of record.

Whether a handshake in a coincidental meeting over yet another rubber chicken dinner or a future formal alliance, I believe what you young people call a "convergence" will only benefit our state and the enlightenment of both viewers and readers.

The *Oklahoma News Report* and OETA's historic dedication to energizing awareness

of our citizenry about the governmental, cultural, and educational future of our state has only been enhanced with the addition of the award-winning *Stateline* and *Gallery* series. Thank you for recognizing these fine programs.

I wish you congratulations on all of your well-deserved awards, including the SPJ awards which drew you and Dick Pryor together in the possibilities of partnership.

Juanita Kidd
Edmond

It's a Family Affair

My baby sister (age fifty) did not give me another subscription to *Oklahoma Today* this Christmas. Shame on her! Guess she thinks I should grow up and pay for my own.



WHERE ARE YOU?

AN OKLAHOMA TODAY CONTEST

Nestled in Oklahoma's southern half amid the foothills of a rocky Oklahoma mountain range, this is the historic home of a Native American war chief who racked up eight wives and twenty-five offspring before passing away in 1911 at the age of fifty-seven. Located in a "high-dollar" town near one of Oklahoma's military bases, its owner outranked any general of his time, and the sixteen stars painted on the home's metal roof prove it. Do you know the name of this home and its former owner? Mail entries to *Oklahoma Today*, Attn: "Where Are You?", 15 North Robinson, Suite 100, Oklahoma City, OK 73102, or send responses to editorial@oklahomatoday.com. Entries must be received by July 15, 2003. Three winners, drawn from all correct entries, will receive an *Oklahoma Today* T-shirt.



Seriously, *Oklahoma Today* gives me great delight. When it arrives in the mail, I drop everything and read it in one sitting from cover to cover. Unfortunately, none of our family lives in Oklahoma anymore—we grew up there and all graduated from OU. But Oklahoma will always be home.

Thanks to your article, my sisters and I reminisced about Beverly's Pancake Corner on Northwest Expressway and Pennsylvania (*The Oklahoma Today Guide to Cafes & Diners*). We used to walk from our house on Fifty-fifth Street and Bellevue across a vacant lot to Beverly's—and that was when Penn Square Mall was still a cow pasture! Keep *Oklahoma Today* coming. Life wouldn't be the same without it.

Meg Branson
Midland, Texas

Moore to Love

Thank you for the wonderful article about my career in the May/June 2003 issue ("Portrait of the Sculptor"). The skills of your writers, Christina Pickard a fine example, are the reason *Oklahoma Today* is the top magazine of the state. Keep up the good work, and please keep in touch as we create the *Oklahoma Centennial Land Run Monument*.

Paul Moore
Norman

Distance Learning

I've lived in Indianapolis now for eight years but just can't quite claim to be a Hoo-

R.E. LINDSEY



Watonga in 1941. The pool, filled with constantly flowing water from the "Big Spring," was so cold that not many would brave the water temperature.

In addition to lifeguard duties, I cleaned the women's and men's dressing rooms, drained the pool every ten days, and washed down the sides with chemicals to prevent algae growth. My work week was twelve hours per day, seven days per week—all for the grand salary of \$60 per month.

As the current park manager states, it is, indeed, the most scenic pool in the state.

Once an Okie, always an Okie. I tell my Texas friends that when I crossed the Red River to Texas, I improved the IQ of both states!

Richard N. LaFaver
The Woodlands, Texas

It Doesn't Get Any Better

Well, you've done it. You've finally outdone yourselves. The May/June 2003 issue is a jewel of time and place, a balm for war-jangled nerves.

Norma L. Thomas
Edmond

Our Pleasure

Oklahoma Today ran an article about my family, the Prichards, in your 1997 Special Travel Issue ("The Heart of Little Italy"). You wouldn't believe how much business we received because of your article. Our little family business is growing and growing, thanks to you for getting the word out

about Roseanna's Italian Food.

I thought you would like to know that we have bottled our pasta sauce, and it is now in four Wal-Mart stores in Oklahoma. And our salad dressing is in the works. (Our father would be so proud of us.)

I know this is late, but thank you so much for including us in your article. Please come back to visit. We would love to feed you.

Emily Prichard-Stangl
Norman

Phone Skills a Must

We recently moved from Tulsa to Ardmore. Of course, when one moves, there are many people to notify of an address change. I made call after call, letting magazines and others know of our new address. Without exception, I got automated voice mail and waited, it seemed forever, to give someone our new address. Sometimes, even after calling, I was told to put it in writing.

Imagine my surprise when I called *Oklahoma Today* and a real person answered on the first ring and said she could take care of everything!

Thank you for real customer service. We love *Oklahoma Today*.

Paul and Claudia Mathews
Ardmore

CONGRATULATIONS!

The votes are in and it's official: "Where Are You?" remains a hit! In our March/April issue, many of you responded with the correct answer, Highway 63. Our winners are Hazel Webb of Smithville, Arla J. Cruzen of Cleveland, and Homer Hulme of Chickasha. May/June winners include Evelyn Cheek of Cleveland, Leona Goodman of Midwest City, and Wilma Sword of Edmond. The correct answer was the town of Hominy. Thanks to all of those who entered. Keep those entries coming in.

Oklahoma Today welcomes the views of readers. Letters are subject to editing and must include name, address, and a daytime phone number. Send letters to: *Oklahoma Today*, Attn: Editor, 15 North Robinson, Suite 100, Oklahoma City, OK 73102, or fax to (405) 522-4588. Address electronic mail to letters@oklahomatoday.com.



The Water's Fine

I am a native Oklahoman, currently retired and residing in Texas. I truly enjoy your magazine, and many of the articles make me nostalgic for the years I grew up in Geary and Watonga during the Dust Bowl and Depression years. Your article on the forty-three swimming pools ("Swelter Shelters," May/June 2003) was particularly interesting to me.

I was the second lifeguard employed at the Roman Nose State Park pool in

ART HISTORY

Randy Powers' graffiti chic bridges the gap between present and past.

By Shauna Lawyer Struby

Rock-a-Bye Bridge ►

"Rock your way back in time," says the tag on this piece, embellished with pieces of graffiti paint. Powers salvaged the rocking chair from a neighborhood trash pickup, then disassembled, refurbished, and reassembled it after outfitting it with pieces from the old bridge. A representation of the bridge fashioned with its paint adorns the upper panel. \$2,000. Powers' work is available at Route 66 at 50 Penn Place in Oklahoma City. (405) 848-6166.



▲ Ticket to Write

Randy Powers' graffiti art can be pricey or, as with these items, very affordable. Layers of heated graffiti paint, which Powers harvested in the days before the bridge was demolished, are wrapped around a ballpoint pen to create a unique writing utensil. Graffiti paint pieces applied to key rings are perfect for keeping a bit of Oklahoma in your pocket all the time, no matter where you are. \$25 each.



▲ Have a Heart

Talk about a heart-to-heart: "A lot of locals feel a connection with my work because they painted at the bridge," says Powers. You'll take a shine to these heart-shaped what-not boxes. The insides are lined with shiny multicolored Hershey's Kiss wrappers, and the foil is then coated with a two-part epoxy. \$95 each.

All Tiled Up ►

Each individual tile in this exquisitely crafted decorative table was handmade by Powers. Since some paint pieces are up to an inch and a half thick, Powers sanded them to reveal layer upon layer of paint, making each tile a distinctive work of art in its own right. \$1,800.





Budding Beauties ▶

A recycled Snapple bottle serves as the base shape for this graffiti paint flower vase. \$85. Larger column vases are available for \$140. Light the flames of nostalgia with this votive candle holder (\$200), or claim a bit of history with a piece of Oklahoma City transportation arcana (\$150).



Hooked on Graffiti ▲

With a pair of these earrings, you'll model a piece of Oklahoma's past. Route 66 owner Jeannette Koenig says Powers' graffiti paint art is popular with both Oklahomans and out-of-state visitors. "People who buy Randy's art just want to take a piece of Oklahoma with them," she says. \$25 a pair.



◀ A Clear and Present Sealant

"Everyone made these pieces, in a sense," says Koenig, referring to the many layers of paint applied by countless people in the bridge's sixty-year history. Powers says once people understand the origins of the paint, they're in awe. The durable clear finish—the equivalent of fifty coats of varnish—on pieces like this refurbished soda fountain chair helps preserve the history each piece represents. \$150.



◀ Coming up Lotus

Sit at this table and contemplate the lotus flower, a symbol of purity and an appropriate icon given the one-of-a-kind patterns Powers creates. Koenig says the table reminds her of the nifty Fifties. "It's a great way to preserve history," says Powers of reusing salvaged items. \$800.



SUSPENDED IN TIME

Oklahoma City's Graffiti Bridge, as it was known, in addition to being the scene of marriage proposals, reunions, and parties, was primarily known for giving mischievous high school students—who started painting it in the 1930s—a broad canvas for an evening of fun. The old bridge, located south of what is now the intersection of Classen and Western Avenue, was demolished on June 29, 1991, to make way for a municipal street project.

After the demolition, artist Randy Powers scraped layers of paint from the rubble, and when a friend suggested he do something with them, Powers agreed. For years he labored to refine a technique for transforming the graffiti paint into art before coming up with his current method involving sanding, heating, and shaping layers of varnish.

"I hope my graffiti paint art promotes people using their imaginations," says Powers, a commercial painter. "You can create anything you see in your mind."



THE OKLAHOMAN

**Who has the dish
on chocolate cake
and chicken
fried steak?**



"Patriotism is not short, frenzied outbursts of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime."

—Adlai E. Stevenson

July Fun

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 There's still time to catch the Edmond Historical Society Museum's traveling exhibit, <i>American WW II Posters: Social Influence of Wartime Information</i>. Through July 19.	2 They'll be singin' for days at the Bluegrass Jam in Duncan. Join the fun all weekend long at Shady Oaks RV Park. Through July 6.	3 Look out, Stone Cold: The USA Wrestling Kids National Championship, the final leg of the prestigious kids' Triple Crown Title, is coming to the Chisholm Trail Expo Center in Enid. Through July 5.	4 ▶ Celebrate Independence Day with parades, live entertainment, and of course, fireworks. Anadarko, Eufaula, Healdton, and Tonkawa are among the many towns lighting up the night sky.	
6 ▲ Today's the last day to get a glimpse of <i>Titanic: The Artifact Exhibit</i> at the Omniplex in Oklahoma City. On deck, hundreds of authentic artifacts from the famous ship.	7 Fond of floats? See the <i>I Love a Parade!</i> photo exhibit at the Plains Indians & Pioneers Museum in Woodward, featuring parade photos from prestatehood to the present. July 5-August 16.	8 ▶ And all that jazz. Tonight, the curtain goes up on the stage version of <i>Chicago</i> at the Civic Center Music Hall in Oklahoma City. Tickets, \$25-\$40. Through July 12.		10 Take a road trip to Stroud for the Sac and Fox Nation Powwow. You'll find traditional crafts, food, and dance competitions through July 13.	11 For some horsing around this week, attend the Palomino World Show at the Tulsa Fairgrounds. July 10-18.	12 Don't expect snow during the Christmas in July Festival. A boat parade, karaoke contests, and more warm-weather happenings will make folks merry at Foss State Park. Yesterday and today.
	◀ 14 Woody Guthrie would be 91 years old today. Every summer, his hometown of Okemah honors its most famous citizen with the Woody Guthrie Folk Festival, this year held July 9-13.	15 Eskimo Joe's, Stillwater's Jumpin' Little Juke Joint, is celebrating its 28th anniversary. Grab this year's T-shirt and join in on the fun. July 14-19.	16 Cross a fish with a painting and what do you get? <i>The Hands On: Animals and Modern Art</i> exhibit at the Eleanor Kirkpatrick Gallery in Oklahoma City at City Arts Center. Through August 9.	17 ▶ Didn't get enough yesterday? Head back to City Arts as the wanna-be sheep-dog comes to life tonight in Oklahoma City with <i>Babe, the Sheep Pig</i>. Through August 1. Tickets \$5-\$7.		19 Yummy. Yesterday, the Porter Peach Festival started downtown, with everything from a kiddie carnival to a golf tournament. Don't miss the free peaches.
20 We all scream for ice cream. Today is National Ice Cream Day. Travel to your local Oklahoma-owned Braum's store for a double dip of mint chocolate chip or good old-fashioned vanilla.	21 It's one, two, three strikes you're out as the RedHawks play the Nashville Sounds at the Bricktown Ballpark in Oklahoma City. The bats start crackin' at 7:05 p.m.	22 Enjoy the hottest time of the year by taking Fido or Fifi for an invigorating walk. Don't forget the leash and comfortable shoes and be sure you both stay hydrated.	23 Don't miss the <i>Allan Houser: Water</i> exhibit. A collection of more than 40 watercolors will be on display July 4-September 28 at the Price Tower Arts Center in Bartlesville.	24 There's still time, just barely. Tonight is the next-to-last concert at the Chisholm Trail Park in Yukon. Every Thursday through July 31 offers your ears a variety of music.	25 Grab some mustard and relish for National Hot Dog Month. Believe it or not, Americans will chow down on more than seven billion hot dogs between Memorial Day and Labor Day.	26 Come see why they paid with poultry in <i>The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas</i>. The Gaslight Theatre in Enid is putting on the production that started July 18 and ends tonight.
THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT  BEATRIX POTTER The original and national edition	◀ 28 Celebrate Beatrix Potter's birthday by purchasing one of her famous children's books, <i>The Tale of Peter Rabbit</i>, at Steve's Books and Magazines in Tulsa or Full Circle Bookstore in Oklahoma City.	29 A fair with traditional flair. 4-H and FFA exhibits, a horse show, ranch rodeo, and lawn mower pull are all on tap at the Craig County Fair in Vinita. Through August 2.	30 Enjoy this Oklahoma summer day: Gather up your gang, jump in the car, and take a cruise on the Mother Road. If time allows, stop in on the National Route 66 Museum in Elk City.	31 ▶ Make the most of July's last day and catch thrills at a state amusement park. In Tulsa, check out Bell's or take a trip down the turnpike to Frontier City.		

OKLAHOMA
A Supplement to Oklahoma Today *Today*

*The Oklahoma Today Guide
to Cafes & Diners*

**CAFES
&
DINERS**

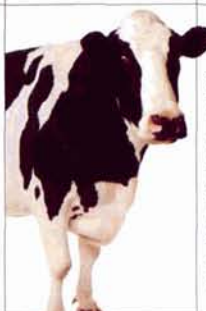
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or from *Oklahoma Today*.**

"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken."—James Dent

AugustSun

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					◀ 1 Sandbags overboard as the Gatesway Balloon Festival, held at Northeastern State University in Broken Arrow, sets adrift for its tenth year of hot air. Through Sunday.	▼ 2 Think swallowing a seed will sprout a vine within? Find out for sure at Valliant's annual Watermelon Festival. Concerts, games, and a parade are in store, as well as plenty of juicy melon.
3 Delight in relief from hot temps at Frederick's Ice Cream Social. Bring homemade ice cream and join in hymns at the historic church on the grounds of the Pioneer Heritage Townsite Center.	4 Hundreds gather in Anadarko for the yearly American Indian Exposition. Experience arts, crafts, and culture during the five-day celebration at the Caddo County Fairgrounds. Through Saturday.	5 Whittle your way to Shawnee for the first day of the Woodcarver's Festival at the Santa Fe Depot Museum. The show spotlights carved items from across the state. Through August 29.	6 If you can't beat the heat, bask in it at the Lake Keystone Dog Days Festival in Mannford. In addition to standard lake fare, a kids triathlon and houseboat regatta round out activities. Through Saturday.	7 Elizabethan gaiety arrives stateside with Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park. Bring a blanket and dine alfresco while enjoying a performance of <i>Othello</i> at Hafer Park in Edmond.		
10 Today is the first of a nearly three-month exhibition, <i>Clement Greenberg: A Critic's Collection</i>, at Philbrook Museum in Tulsa. Foray into the mid-twentieth century genre with masters like Jackson Pollock.		◀ 12 It's a quest for culture at Tulsa's Gilcrease Museum. Frederic Remington takes to the gallery walls with the <i>Color of Night</i> exhibit. An ancillary exhibition of his sculpture will also be on display. Through November 9.	13 Get saddled up for the 101 Wild West PRCA Rodeo in Ponca City. Take part in the four-day event with a little barbecue, a parade, and a rodeo dance. Through Saturday.	14 Strum along with the folksy tunes of the Green Country Bluegrass Music Festival at Dripping Springs State Park in Okmulgee. Three-day pass, \$25. Through Saturday.	15 Hallelujah! It's time for gospel music. The Seminole Gospel Sing showcases professional gospel groups on an outdoor stage. Through tomorrow.	16 This weekend marks the date for the Oklahoma County Free Fair. Gather at State Fair Park in Oklahoma City and vie for a blue ribbon at this annual event preceding the state fair next month.
	◀ 18 Celebrate Stay Home with Your Kids Day. Dig out the finger paints, throw caution to the wind, and unearth the creative child within as you play with the kids in the comfort of your casa.	19 Explore educational yesteryear. This month, the Edmond Historical Society Museum showcases the rural and one-room schoolhouse with its historic school exhibit.		21 ▶ Oh, bother! Drop in on the bear of little brain as the Oklahoma Children's Theatre in Oklahoma City presents <i>Winnie the Pooh</i>. Enjoy the hundred-acre wood antics today at City Arts Center.		23 Lace up your sneakers and wait for the gunshot. The seventh annual Run for Arts takes off in downtown Fort Gibson today. Uninspired by the 5K? Sign on for the more laid-back mile fun run.
24 31 Ars Gratia Artis! Celebrate art for art's sake at Arts Festival Oklahoma, held on the Oklahoma City Community College Campus. Through September 1.			▲ 27 Celebrate summer days with a trip to the Payne County Free Fair. Starting today, the Payne County Expo Center in Stillwater hosts four days of livestock competitions, rides, and a children's barnyard.	28 Take advantage of the evening sun and bid adieu to the dining room with a seven o'clock picnic. Grab paper plates, light a citronella candle, and savor a meal in the fresh Oklahoma air.	29 Diversion is criminal when professionals and inmates go head-to-head at the Oklahoma Prison Rodeo. The PRCA-sanctioned event is held at the Oklahoma State Prison in McAlester.	30 It's golden! Festivities abound for fifty years of caves at Alabaster Caverns State Park in Freedom. Join in on wildlife programs, nature walks, and plenty of amusement for children. Through September 1.

Scoliosis isn't just for kids.



Mary's spine before surgery.



Mary's back after surgery.



-Mary Baldy, scoliosis patient

Mary was 18 when diagnosed with scoliosis. As she grew older, the curve in her spine worsened, leading to a painful, obvious hump in her back and difficulty breathing. Mary was told her only options were pain medications and physical therapy. In her late forties the situation became desperate. "After years of searching for treatment, I found help at Consulting Orthopedists in Dallas where I had spinal reconstructive surgery," says Mary, now a 51-year-old pediatric clinical nurse manager. "I am able to stand straight and without pain for the first time in decades. Although it has only been a short time since my surgery, I have returned to work full time."

Consulting Orthopedists is a nationally and internationally known facility devoted exclusively to the treatment of severe scoliosis. We specialize in treating pediatric and adult spinal curves, revising previous scoliosis surgeries and managing pain caused by scoliosis. We are among a handful of facilities in the country, and work diligently to accommodate a variety of health plans. Help is available.



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THE RANGE

Summertime Blues

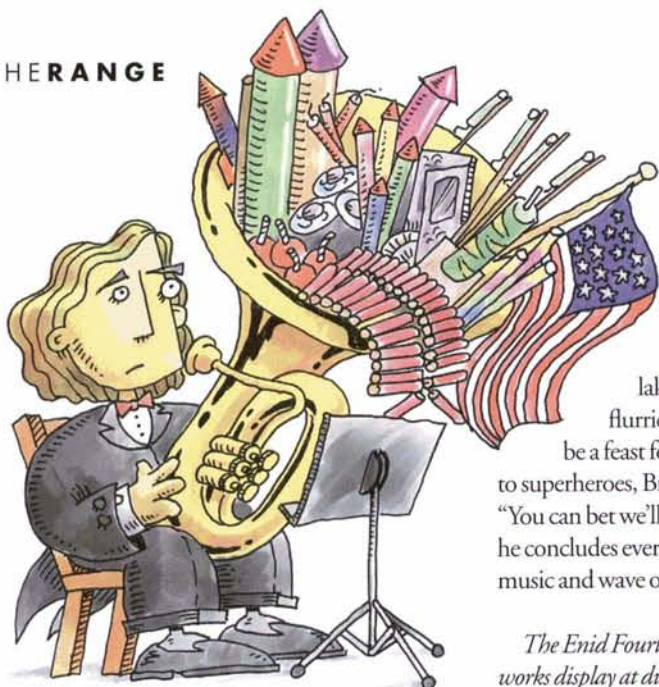
AQUA-TASTIC OKIE FUN

Sparkling water, not a cloud in the sky, and time to spare is an easy recipe for a perfect July day. Summer in Oklahoma is a natural fit for relaxation, especially when spending downtime on a Sooner State lake. There's no need for a faraway retreat—stay close to home and enjoy the native aquatics on one of Oklahoma's many bodies of water. With swimming beaches, water skiing, and some of the best fishing north of the equator, Oklahoma lakes provide hot-weather recreation rivaling that of any resort. Sit down with a map, get creative with your options, and plan your own in-state journey. Just be sure to special order your good times sunny-side up.

—ANDREA LOPEZ

Lake Texoma, located near Kingston, Oklahoma, is equidistant between Oklahoma City and Dallas, just off I-35. The 93,000-acre lake is the state's second largest and offers summertime water fun of all varieties.

STEVEN WALKER



Let Freedom Ring!

ENID ON THE FOURTH OF JULY

Last July 4, five thousand people spread quilts and unfolded lawn chairs at Meadowlake Park in Enid. At dusk on the bank of the lake, the Enid Symphony performed "I'll Be Home for Christmas" as flurries of fireworks fell from the sky. This year's ceremony is also likely to be a feast for the senses. "In thirteen years, we've done movie themes, a salute to superheroes, Broadway, and *Star Wars*," says symphony director Douglas Newell. "You can bet we'll honor the military this year." In keeping with Independence Day, he concludes every program with old favorites. "It's an opportunity to enjoy patriotic music and wave our flags, to zero in on the freedoms that we enjoy."

—Diana Khanagov

The Enid Fourth of July Celebration begins with an 8 p.m. concert followed by a fireworks display at dusk. (580) 237-2494.

FAUX GLOW

Dying for a tan, but not willing to die for a tan? Many a sun worshiper has regretted dedication to the solar gods when later faced with wrinkles, dry skin, or worse, skin cancer.

If you love bronze skin but hate the consequences, Oklahoma-owned Fake Bake (fakebake4salons.com) may be your ticket to tan.

Hailed by beauty editors and touted by celebrities like Britney Spears and Madonna, Fake Bake is made of botanical extracts and offers a safe, realistic tan without the orange skin or unpleasant odor commonly linked to self-tanners.

These benefits, combined with an easy application process, add to Fake Bake's appeal. With marketing and sales based in Tulsa and products available in salons statewide, the company's soaring sales and increased distribution make for a golden future. Grab your sunglasses.

—Andrea Lopez



THE POLITICAL RECORD

Read our lips. In the 2003 film *Head of State*, Chris Rock studied to be a presidential candidate by viewing political commercials in the Julian P. Kanter Political Commercial Archive at the University of Oklahoma's Political Communication Center (405/324-3114; ou.edu/pccenter).

This unique resource holds 70,000 political commercials, the oldest dating to 1936. Nearly 25,000 were from former curator Julian P. Kanter's collection, the remainder acquired from candidates, consultants, advertising agencies, and political parties.

Rare gems at the center include Walt Disney's only animated commercial for Dwight D. Eisenhower, above, and a mid-1960s advertisement with John Wayne promoting Ronald Reagan for governor of California. That's one for the Gipper.

—Brooke Demetz

We

RECOMMEND

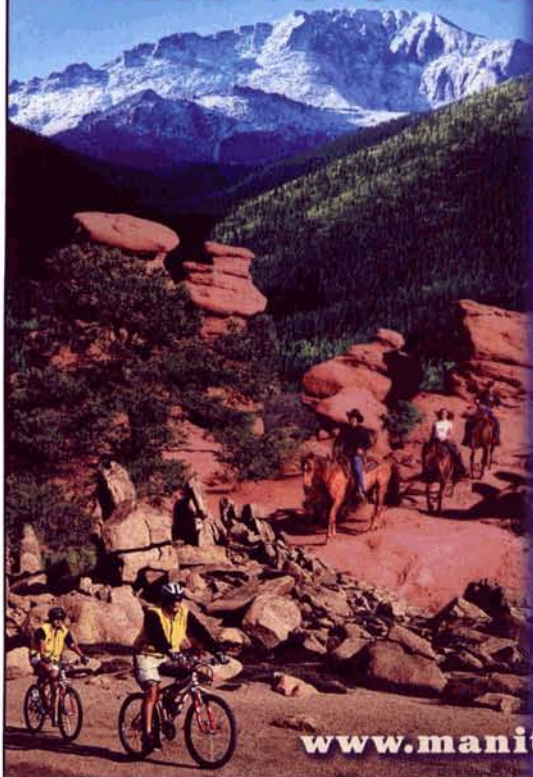
- *History of an Architectural Firm: Rees Associates*, a coffee table book written by Bob Blackburn
- Scaling the "cliffs" at OKC Rocks climbing gym
- A crimson and cream slush with an order of Cajun fries from the Classic 50s Drive-in in Norman
- A steak at Chuck Wagon Restaurant in Vinita (don't miss the adjoining church)



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September 23, 2003

2:00 p.m.

Bartlesville Community Center

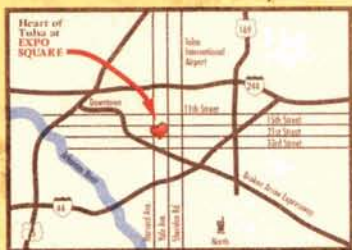
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Each July, 'Heart of Tulsa' is located in the Exposition Center Building at Expo Square. The admission charge covers entry for all three days. There are thousands of reasons to shop and most visitors plan to spend all day at the exhibits. The parking is free. RV hook-ups are available and security service is provided around the clock. Food service is also available.



Collecting koi can be expensive. Some rare varieties and larger fish can sell for as much as \$15,000. Here, the jumbo champion from last year's koi show held in Oklahoma City.

The Art of Being Koi

FISHING FOR COMPLIMENTS AT THE OKLAHOMA KOI SHOW

DON'T CALL THEM OVERSIZED GOLDFISH. JAPANESE MONKS DEVELOPED KOI, or Nishikigoi, after discovering a color mutation in a common carp. Fast forward two hundred years to find members of the Oklahoma Koi Society so passionate about the fish that some make special trips to Japan to purchase new specimens for their backyard ponds. Can't understand the lure? Check out these unusual fish on Labor Day weekend at the 2003 Oklahoma Koi Show.

"Koi are treated like pets," says Harry Greer, president of the Oklahoma Koi Society. "Our members name their fish and grow very attached to them."

Koi are long-lived fish, able to thrive for decades in a well-maintained backyard pond. Though not as demanding of our attention as our four-legged friends, koi do require regular care and upkeep. Pond water must be filtered and oxygenated, and the fish should be fed up to five times a day during summer for maximum growth. Many koi owners construct bridges and paths with the pond as the focal point of the yard.

While the annual Labor Day show is the biggest fish in this club's pond, monthly meetings help keep passions high. A typical gathering might find thirty active members munching on goodies and watching a home video documenting a koi harvest in Niigata, Japan. Some members of the group attend koi shows as distant as Phoenix and San Diego.

At this year's show, vendors will be on hand to discuss pumps, filters, food, ponds, and more. Koi enthusiasts from across the country will bring a wealth of information and experience.

Come discover for yourself why the enigmatic star of the 2003 Oklahoma Koi Show could never be confused with a goldfish.

—Ami Reeves

The Oklahoma Koi Show will take place August 30-31 at the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds in Oklahoma City. oklakoi.org.

How Much Is That Syrup in the Window?

SWEET STUFF FROM AN OKLAHOMA CROONER

IT'S BEEN FIFTY YEARS SINCE CLAREMORE native Patti Page recorded the classic, "Doggy in the Window." Though still singing, Page has another passion to share—a line of authentic New England food products as sweet as her songs.

In 1995, Page and husband Jerry Filicetto began producing maple

syrups from the original sugarhouse on their nineteenth-century Hilltop Farm in New Hampshire. Demand grew to warrant the purchase of a larger sugar bus—a stand of maple trees covering 250 acres—in Maine, which helps produce the syrups in the line.

"You get it when God gives it to you," Page says of tree-tapping time, as temperatures allow collection about six to eight weeks a year.

Approximately forty gallons of sap then are cooked down for each gallon of syrup.

"Our syrup is made the real 'down-home' way,"

Page says, "without chemicals in tapping or processing."

The certified organic maple syrups come in three grades of sweetness: light, medium, and dark amber, dark the sweetest.

The syrups, along with organically produced maple cream and buttermilk pancake mixes, are available in various sizes, in combinations, and in festive gift packages, some including Page's recordings. Syrups also come in violin-shaped bottles and two sizes of "Patti's Syrup That Sings" jugs with a digital-quality, thirty-second snippet of Page singing each time the patented cap is opened.

—Cindy Kelly Houck

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Manufactured by Claremore native Patti Page and her husband Jerry Filicetto at Hilltop Farm in New Hampshire, Patti Page's organic maple products are sold in decorative glass and plastic bottles.



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Started four years ago as way to enhance local OETA programming, *Stateline* airs nine segments per year on issues like archaeology, gambling, and politics.

Although topics vary, the emphasis is always the same—people. That's true for those telling the story and those viewing it. "When I started this, I wanted at least one person out there to slap his head and say, 'I didn't know that!'" says writer/researcher Billie Rodely, who's been part of the show's five-member team since its inception.

A segment premiering in July will cause just such a reaction. *Stateline* #501 examines Oklahoma's corrections department, explaining how taxpayer dollars are spent within the system and taking an unflinching look at the challenges facing it. Segment producer/reporter Susan Miller says, "It's always an adventure to



The July edition of *Stateline* tackles the state's corrections system.

crawl through the subject matter and learn something new." Stay tuned for the experience.

—Heather Harkins

Stateline #501 airs July 22 at 9 p.m., July 24 at 8 p.m., and July 27 at 11 a.m. OETA broadcasts in Oklahoma City on channel 13, in Tulsa on channel 11, in Cheyenne on channel 12, and in Eufaula on channel 3. channeloeta.onenet.net.

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Anna Myers



Children's author Anna Myers was born in Texas, but, she says, "I got to Oklahoma as soon as I could." After growing up in Deer Creek, she lived in Chandler. Today, she and her husband John Calvin, a high school classmate she was reunited with after a class reunion, make their home in Tulsa. Myers' many honors include two Oklahoma Book Awards.

- Q: What inspires you?
A: Stories inspire me. I feel almost as if they are living things, waiting to be told.
- Q: Who are your writing role models?
A: Katherine Paterson, a two-time winner of the Newbery Medal, is perhaps my greatest writing role model.
- Q: What is your favorite quote?
A: My favorite thing to teach was *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder. I think my favorite quote from that work is, "You're twenty-one or twenty-two, and you make some decisions; then whisssh! You're seventy." I was twenty-two when I first taught *Our Town*, and now I am ten years from seventy. It went by very quickly, and I am grateful I made the decisions I did.
- Q: What do you like best about yourself?
A: I like the fact that I form deep and lasting bonds of friendship. I think I understand myself best when I see myself reflected in the eyes of dear, old friends.
- Q: What would you change about yourself?
A: I would change the fact that I am eternally lost. Age has not improved my sense of direction.
- Q: How do you deal with adversity?
A: I turn to family and dear friends for support. I also believe strongly in prayer.
- Q: What's your favorite place in Oklahoma?
A: A country cemetery near Kinta, Oklahoma. I can stand in one spot in Sans Bois Cemetery and see the graves of both sets of my grandparents, my parents, a brother, and a sister.

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Christine Joseph studied the sweet art of chocolate-making in her native Belgium before opening Nouveau in Tulsa. Her handmade creations sell for \$8.50 for an eight-piece box or \$34 a pound.

The Art of Nouveau

A TULSA CHOCOLATIER FINDS A NICHE THAT'S DARK AND RICH

IT TAKES A LOT OF FAITH TO BRING CHOCOLATE from seed to sweet. Christine Joseph oozes it. The pristine dark, milk, and white hand-dipped morsels inside her east Tulsa display case are the products of faith, and of patience.

In the exacting science of chocolate—where one degree Celsius can ruin a vat of Belgian dark—the art does not come easy. For inspiration, Joseph recalls the aromatic exhaust of beet-sugar factories in her native Tienen. “You smell refineries here,” she says. “In Belgium, we smelled sugar.”

The Nouveau chocolate factory consists of three high-tech, stainless-steel tempering machines in which bulk chocolate and sugar melt and combine at precise temperatures. Joseph hoists the eleven-pound scored blocks like sacred tablets. Each machine eats a block of bulk chocolate in no time. Melted, they flow like black gold.

For two years in the mid-1980s, Joseph operated

a Cherry Street shop and sold the sort of chocolates she'd grown up eating. After later careers in the hospitality industry and teaching, she returned to Belgium to study chocolate with the masters in 2000. The next year, she staked her claim on Memorial Drive and her Tulsa future on Belgian chocolate.

Customers arrive armed with cravings and special orders. Joseph makes, husband Greg Null markets, and three-year-old son, Christopher, tastes. Reared on Mom's recipe, he knows good chocolate. Nouveau's “official taster” spit one of his last birthday gifts—a single piece of name-brand chocolate—onto the kitchen floor.

“Once in a while,” Joseph says, “you have to do quality control.” —Mark Brown

Nouveau is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. 1601 South Memorial Drive in Tulsa. (918) 664-1830.



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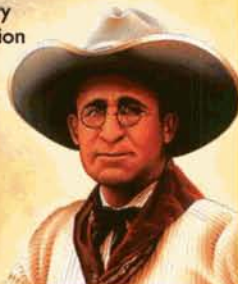
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THE PICASSO OF POOCHES

Going to the Dogs with M² Studio Portraits



MATT MOFFETT NEVER SET OUT to be the Picasso of pet portraiture. In fact, he never set out to be an artist at all. But a chance encounter on Christmas morning 1998 changed his life.

That's when Moffett met, or rather rescued, Alejandro, a black poodle left for dead on a Tulsa street after being hit by a car.

"The driver didn't even stop," says Moffett, who witnessed the incident and later took the battered animal to a veterinarian. Soon, Alejandro became his beloved pet and ultimately the inspiration for his art when the dog died two years later.

Moffett sought to honor Alejandro by commissioning an oil painting but quickly discovered that pet portraits were too expensive to justify on his public schoolteacher's salary. With no formal art training, Moffett purchased paints and brushes and got to work.

The finished portrait of Alejandro still hangs in his M² Studio in downtown Tulsa. Friends, impressed, began asking him to paint their pets. Eventually, word spread, and Moffett has since been capturing animal countenances on canvas for clients both locally and nationally. Some have even flown him out to meet their furry friends.

"People have described my style as Picasso-esque, a loose realism," he says.

Others have referred to it as surrealistic realism or folksy. However characterized, his paintings feature bold colors, broad strokes, and animated subjects intended to capture the personality of the pet. To accomplish this, Moffett spends time with the animal and its owners, taking up to two hundred photos.

"I'm able to get into the dog's head," says Moffett, who today owns a chocolate Labrador and two dachshunds. "I grew up with a lot of dogs and have a huge affinity for them."

Moffett spends virtually every available minute in his studio when not teaching art at Audubon International School in Tulsa. While pet portraits make up most of his portfolio, Moffett is no one-trick puppy. He also paints other animals and people portraits, bringing to them his inimitable, expressive style.

"The goal of art," Moffett says, "is to make you feel something. I just want to move people and inspire them."

—Scott Wigton

Matt Moffett's custom portraits start at \$500. M² Studio is located at 1203 East Third Street in Tulsa. (918) 607-4955; m2studioportraits.com.



Summers in Malaga, Spain, help keep pet portraitist Matt Moffett motivated. It's no accident that he rents an apartment on the same plaza where his inspiration, Pablo Picasso, was born.





The owners of the Erick Honey Farm don't limit their goods to honey alone. In addition to the sweet treats, they also sell candy, candles, and crafts.

STICKY FINGERS

The Erick Honey Farm

MORE THAN FORTY-ONE YEARS AGO, A HONEY stand near Erick in far western Oklahoma enticed Route 66 motorists. Please put your money in the box, the sign asked, and enjoy your quart of honey.

These days, the spirit of the Erick Honey Farm remains the same—a commitment to selling pure, western Oklahoma honey and friendly customer service.

"The honey farm is more an experience than anything else. It's very nostalgic," says Lori Coats, who has owned the business since 1998 with her husband, Richard, and her mother, Judy Hogan. "People come here because they experienced it as a kid, and they want their kids to experience it."

During his childhood, Richard Coats attended school with children of the original owners, the Wilhelms. When the Coats found themselves in need of a second income and the honey farm came up for sale, it looked like a perfect opportunity.

The Coats have continued a tradition started when the farm opened in 1962—educational tours with presenta-



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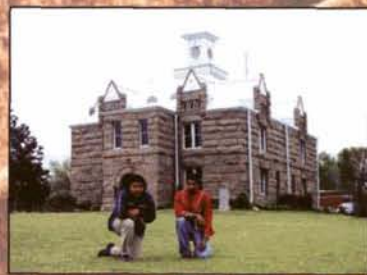
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For a free brochure on the Indian Arts and Crafts Act and how to file a complaint, contact the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, MS 4004-MIB Washington, DC 20240, T: 202.208.3773, E: iacb@os.doi.gov, W: www.iacb.doi.gov

Visit the Southern Plains Indian Museum

See authentic Indian arts and crafts, located in Anadarko, Oklahoma at 715 East Central Boulevard. The museum is open year-round and hosts a variety of exhibits from traditional clothing and artifacts, to contemporary paintings and sculptures. Southern Plains Indian Museum, P.O. Box 749, Anadarko, Oklahoma 73005, T: 405.247.6227

tions explaining how the nectar of clover, alfalfa, and wildflowers is converted into golden sweetness by the honeybees. A double-sided, revolving display case, filled with honeycomb and live bees, illustrates the process.

But the store stocks products beyond the expected jars and plastic bears full of honey. Homemade honey mustard is a mainstay, as is spun honey, a special variety with the consistency of butter and laced with mouthwatering flavors like chocolate, cinnamon, peanut butter, and pecan.

Beeswax and taper candles and scented votives are other customer favorites. Coats uses the "tried and true" recipe perfected by Maxine Wilhelm more than thirty years ago.

Coats also does a little experimenting with her handmade soaps. This year, she's introducing new formulations of the all-natural glycerin concoctions, including honey and oatmeal, strawberry and cream, and orange peel. She says, "Most everything I make here, you could eat."

Whatever it is, it'll be a honey of a deal.

—Holly Hendrix

To get to Erick Honey Farm, turn north off I-40 at Exit 5, Honeyfarm Road, and look for buildings a short distance north of the interstate. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. (580) 526-3759; erickhoneyfarm.com.

Along with the standard honey, Erick Honey Farm also sells a hot variety flavored with chili peppers.



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the land we love

By Jim Tolbert

Photography by Yousef Khanfar

A FRIEND SENT ME A POEM BY, OF ALL PEOPLE, JACK KEROUAC, which she found in the *New York Times*. It described how summer arrives and contained the line, “windmills/of Oklahoma look/in every direction.” Instantly, I was a small boy riding through the dusty heat of Kiowa County on a visit to my grandmother, fascinated by windmills.

I think those childhood visits to Hobart were where my pervasive affection for the Oklahoma landscape may have begun. That connection has been a constant ever since—changing, evolving, maybe maturing, but always an undercurrent in my thoughts. It is in most ways a gift from my father and one that I sincerely hope has been passed to my children.

To a six year old from Oklahoma City, western Oklahoma was endless, bigger, and more infinite than the world. But not frightening. In Hobart, land was omnipresent, no more than a block or two away at any time. Its seamless openness offered exhilarating freedom.

My father had grown up in this harsh landscape, where the only available work was helping a farmer. He spent summers and school breaks working on the red dirt farms that surrounded the town. His was a time when farming was not about fertilizer and herbicides but was largely done by hand, assisted by horses and mules. It must have been hot, demanding work, the kind that would have built in most of us a bone-hard conviction to seek another life. For him, it created a lifetime need for a tangible connection to the land.

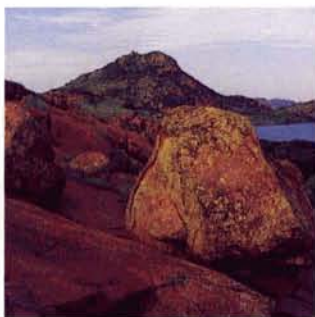
At fifteen, I spent the summer in southern Oklahoma with my other grandmother in Ardmore. It was one of a series of summer jobs, arranged by my father to keep me off the streets and in the outdoors.

At the time, a regional effort was under way to demonstrate the importance of pollinating insects, specifically bees, to the success of the cash crops in the area—from alfalfa to grain sorghum. Several hundred hives were to be trucked from site to site with their impact on production measured and publicized. I was to be the beekeeper's apprentice.

Above, from left: 14,200-acre Broken Bow Lake in the Ouachita National Forest; Major County's Glass Mountains lie between the Cimarron and North Canadian Rivers; the shoreline of the Great Salt Plains Lake spans 41 miles and covers 9,300 acres. Erosion has created unique geological formations in the Arbuckle Mountains, opposite.



To a six year old,
western Oklahoma
was endless, bigger,
and more infinite
than the world. Its
seamless openness
offered exhilarating
freedom.



I built hives, cleaned hives, harvested hives, and got stung a lot, but I learned about botany, biology, husbandry, and how to swear to maximum effect. The real lesson of that summer, however, was a lifetime appreciation for the infinite variety and productivity of Oklahoma's land.

It was the summer of 1940 when my memory was so strongly imprinted with the landscape of my father's Kiowa County boyhood. He found—and purchased—a ranch on the western slope of the Arbuckle Mountains. Rafter Cross Ranch became his avocation and, except for his family, his life's satisfaction.

A mixture of overgrazed native grass and depleted soil fields, Rafter Cross Ranch had for eons epitomized the buffalo range. Situated at the confluence of the short buffalo grass prairies of the Great Plains and the mixed grasses of the mountains, the terrain was laced with seams of big and little bluestem and Indian grass in small pockets worthy of the Osage. Sadly, by the time of my father's purchase, it was sick, much of it unable to support the meanest of weed cover.

My father spent the rest of his life making the land well. He employed the then-limited science of soil conservation, the evolving science of range restoration, and all the cash the ranch could generate to bring it back to life. I worked summers there as a teenager, living with the foreman and learning about cattle and realizing that ranching was genuinely hard work. I became infected with my father's passion.

He didn't demand it. I am not sure he even expected it, but by exposing me to the rhythm and pace of a healing land and by letting me see his own vulnerability to this miraculous progress, I too fell in love.

My four children had little exposure to their grandfather, but they each became connected to his ranch. The open country they experienced as youngsters became a place of learning, if nothing else, about their own father's life. In time, it became necessary to sell the ranch, its stewardship requiring time and frequent contact. None of us had this luxury.

I am, after all, a city person. I deal in books and real estate and have traveled all my adult life putting sick companies right.

Flying home, I sometimes fantasize what I would do with a healing wand, a wand that could close the gaping gullies, reforest the depleted cross timbers, and counterattack the weakened

rangeland. This is the maximum fantasy, to restore the former sweep of the prairies, removing all traces of abuse and exploitation.

Often then, particularly late in the day, from the vantage point offered by my business travels and a commercial airliner, I begin to notice the glint of tens of thousands of farm ponds the soil conservation movement brought to Oklahoma. I notice old fields now terraced with grasses as they gradually spread to cover the sores of erosion. I begin to realize that the raw wounds of open gullies are mostly in my memory, that the dust seldom blows as it once did, and that my father was one of many.

I have never farmed. But I do occasionally dream.



Above, from left: Cattails are plentiful across Oklahoma's tallgrass prairie; Quartz Mountain State Park is located on Lake Altus-Lugert; Great Salt Plains Lake, completed in 1941. Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, opposite, provides habitat for many grazing bison.



R.E. LINDSEY



We come here to remember those who were killed, those
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leave here know the impact of violence. May this memorial
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OKLAHOMA CITY NATIONAL MEMORIAL MISSION STATEMENT

WITHIN THESE WALLS

At the Journal Record Building, the Oklahoma City National
Memorial Center Museum ensures we will never forget.

Steffie Corcoran reports.

APRIL 19, 1995

EIGHT YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE WORLD FIRST ASSOCIATED OKLAHOMA City with a day on a calendar. Time has marched relentlessly forward, gradually but inevitably adding to the divide between the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City and the present. That distance has provided a space for healing, and for remembering.

"We will never forget" is no longer a phrase in shoe polish scribbled on a police car's rear windshield. These four words now signify a national impulse to erect monuments honoring the senseless deaths of brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, sons and daughters. Consider the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

Consider Oklahoma City.

Here, the processes of grief, healing, and remembrance have been soothed, at least in part, by the site on which the tragedy occurred, a place considered by many hallowed ground. Today, the Oklahoma City National Memorial's symbolic gardens and museum occupy that sacred space.

A short walk from the pastoral outdoor grounds to the west entry of the memorial center museum gives visitors scant preparation for the contrast they will experience between one and the other.

The center, inside the Journal Record Building—itself heavily damaged by the massive ammonium nitrate cocktail—rests directly north of the gardens. Proximity and a shared mission statement are among the few things the facilities, two of the three arms of the tripartite \$29.1 million complex, share.

The Oklahoma City National Memorial Center Museum in the former Journal Record Building sits north of the outdoor symbolic memorial. The grounds, designed by Butzer Design Partnership, incorporate several elements, including a field of 168 chairs, a reflecting pool, and the Gates of Time.



OKLAHOMA CITY ATTORNEY BOB JOHNSON IS WIDELY considered the visionary of the Oklahoma City National Memorial effort. Polly Nichols, seriously injured while working inside the Journal Record Building and today chair of the memorial foundation, says, "Early on, Bob told [then-mayor] Ron Norick that he wanted to do something, that he felt compelled to do something. And Ron, to his everlasting credit, realized what an asset Bob would be in a leadership position."

On November 14, 1995, the Oklahoma City Memorial Task Force, chaired by Johnson, passed a resolution stating that one of the components of the permanent memorial be an information center, to include photos and biographies of the 168 victims.

Over the next four years, thousands became involved in the memorial effort, what Johnson refers to as a "very open, consensus-based process." Memorial trustee Richard Williams, a survivor from the General Services Administration, says, "The process itself of consideration for consensus was absolutely unbelievable. It had to be a consensus to determine that we were making the right decisions."

Consensus, anyone will tell you, is rarely easy—or fast. Those hundreds involved in various parts of the project—fundraising, selecting a designer for the outdoor site, construction—labored on. By early 2000, work on the outdoor memorial was nearly complete. Lippert Brothers, an Oklahoma City construction firm, was already at work on the rehabilitation of the Journal Record Building for the city when, in February 2000, they won the bid

to do general contracting on the memorial center. The company had already worked extensively on the outdoor site.

Tom Lippert, senior vice president and project manager for all three jobs, says despite the building's hard hit in 1995, "there were only some select areas that received major damage. That was primarily on the south side of the Journal Record Building. Other than that, the building was quite stout."

Interior design work completed and with just a few loose ends of construction work remaining elsewhere in the building, the \$10 million, 30,000-square-foot Oklahoma City National Memorial Center Museum opened to the public on President's Day, February 19, 2001.

THE OKLAHOMA CITY NATIONAL MEMORIAL CENTER Museum is a unique entity. Receiving no state or federal appropriations for daily operations—but Oklahoma City, the state of Oklahoma, and the federal government made sizable donations during the memorial's construction phase—it is self-funded through admission fees, memorial store profits, museum memberships, funds from the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon, and endowment earnings.

With a staff of eighteen, the museum operates under the jurisdiction of the nine-member Oklahoma City National Memorial Trust, whose members—including chairman Luke Corbett, CEO of Kerr-McGee, and vice-chair Linda Lambert, who owns an independent oil and gas exploration company—are presidential appointees.



The forty-eight-member Oklahoma City National Memorial Foundation manages the endowment and is its fundraising arm. Both boards include survivors, family members of the deceased, and civic leaders.

Unique, too, is the memorial's relationship with the National Park Service, which operates at the request of the trust in cooperation with the memorial's staff and is reimbursed annually for its service. The six park rangers who work at the memorial are responsible for interpretation of the outdoor site and help coordinate security.

Before the dedication ceremony, President and Mrs. Bush took a private tour of the museum. "It is a really well-done place," the president said in his public comments. "It's powerful."

The president's visit brought the national press, and reporters from the *Washington Post* and elsewhere described the museum with the same adjective, "powerful." An ABC news report said, "The center depicts the frenzied panic after the bomb exploded, a short distance from the building's day-care center." In the *Dallas Morning News*, Arnold Hamilton said, "From display to display, the faces, names, and places become familiar again."

The three-level complex on the west side of the Journal Record Building begins with a subdued, granite-walled lobby and tasteful gift store. Security is tight for the fifth-floor administrative offices, and precautionary measures include a sign-in process, badges, escorts, and photo ID.

The second and third floors, filled with media and artifact exhibits, constitute the museum proper. A ten-chapter story line,

scripted by a group of key staff members and volunteers who called themselves the "Wednesday Night Prayer Group," begins on the third floor with a typical morning in Oklahoma City, followed by a journey through the chaos and hysteria of the event and concluding on the second floor with the hope and healing that arose in its aftermath.

The memorial center is an interactive, multimedia experience. Exhibits include glassed-in displays, television monitors with oral histories of the people executive director Kari Watkins calls "walking, talking artifacts," and computerized kiosks. The path through the center twists and turns, something new around every corner.

The images within the memorial center were installed by Hillmann & Carr, an award-winning motion picture and video production company from Washington, D.C., whose clients include the Smithsonian Institution, the National Civil War Museum, and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the model to which the Oklahoma City National Memorial Center Museum is frequently compared.

ACTING AS VISUAL PARTNERS TO THE MANY COMPETING voices inside the museum are artifacts upon artifacts, the province of collections manager Jane Thomas of Guthrie. Thomas, a historian, began her salvage operation as a task force volunteer in the months following the bombing.

"You have to understand," she says, "people thought I was kind of a nut. You know, I'm over at the First United Methodist Church, and I'm saying, 'Can I have your window?'"

Thomas and other early organizers suspected the items that would resonate most with visitors would be the ones they could easily identify with. A dress, a plastic photo ID badge, and a men's restroom, for instance.

In a case on the third floor hangs a pretty long-sleeved dress with a belt, its only visible damage a small tear on the skirt. Florence Rogers, CEO of the Federal Employees Credit Union, lost eighteen colleagues in the bombing. She had worn the dress to work on April 19.

Once she finally made it home that day, Rogers shook out the dress, dusted with debris from the blast, and stuck it in a shelf in her laundry room, out of sight and out of mind. Four years later, she stumbled upon it. "I pressed it up, and I took it to Jane at the archives—I could not throw it away—and I said, 'Jane, do something with this; get it out of my way.'" She pauses. "I didn't know it was going to be displayed in the museum until the board members toured through there. I'm not a person who cries easily, but I stood there and sobbed when I saw it standing there."

In the corner of the same display, the shards of another dress, worn by survivor Nancy Ingram, an IRS secretary inside the credit union at the time of the bombing, fit inside a Ziploc bag.

Thomas envisioned another exhibit filled with ID badges representing the various agencies that worked in rescue and recovery. One

From left: This portion of the museum's ten-chapter story line depicts 'chaos'; President Bush speaks with Richard Williams, Major Ed Hill, and Bob Johnson at the museum dedication on February 19, 2001; flags recovered from the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building debris are displayed within the center.



Recovered items including a rose window, left, from the nearby First United Methodist Church, and dresses worn by Florence Rogers and Nancy Ingram, below right, on April 19, 1995, are now displayed within the museum. Located in the basement of the memorial center, the archives include a wall of hats, below left, originally placed on the outdoor fence.



RESCUE AND RECOVERY

At the Oklahoma City National Memorial Center Museum, the Archives Division Maintains One and a Million.

Collections manager Jane Thomas and curator Heidi Vaughn preside over the Oklahoma City National Memorial 4,500-square-foot museum archives. The area they inhabit includes somewhere between half a million and 800,000 items, a number expected eventually to swell to one million.

"My philosophy is, go broad and prune later," Thomas says. "We don't have any doubt that this is going to have historical significance, but normally history is tested by a period of time, and that hasn't happened yet."

Among the collections are newspaper clippings, photos, and personal accounts. And, of course, there are the T-shirts and ball caps. "A high percentage of them are from first responders, and this place is a pilgrimage for first responders," says Thomas. "These items have incredible display value."

Obtaining artifacts from grieving family members, survivors, and rescuers is a job Thomas doesn't take lightly.

"It's difficult to take things away from people," she says. "I tell them, 'I know it's hard to part with them. But what I know with certainty is, if you want them to be preserved forever, they need to come to us.'"

badge volunteered from a member of each group—FBI, FEMA, the medical examiner's office, and police department—would do. And of course one badge from the Oklahoma City Fire Department.

Thomas had already procured then-Chief Gary Marrs' helmet for a rescuer's display, and now, she thought, what better badge to represent the fire department than the chief's? "I thought his heart was going to break," she says. "It was so hard to give it up. I said, 'Chief Marrs, another one is okay, but this is just special.'"

"Jane can do that," Marrs, a memorial trustee, says of her powers of persuasion. "I thought long and hard about it. She convinced me that it would be better used there than it would sitting in my drawer somewhere."

It's difficult to imagine a productive use for a bombed-out men's restroom. But the one on the second floor landing of the Journal Record Building forever records the devastation of the bomb blast. "One of the things we wanted people to see is how cavities could form—where people survived—because nobody died in this building," says Thomas.

After separating construction residue from that which occurred naturally after the bombing, the room had to be shored up so its destruction could be preserved in perpetuity. The east wall, for example, was reinforced with netting, then tied to supports.

"It's pretty firm up there," Thomas says, noting the room's hidden monitors that help her keep an eye out for pests and changes in the interior that might require attention.

An adjoining closet contains an old typewriter Thomas had long craved, because, as she believes, it's the everyday items visitors most identify with.

"Before I knew the Memorial Center Committee was going to preserve this, I had coveted that typewriter and yet had never gotten it. When the construction crew came in and closed this off, I realized it was forever going to live here."

IF YOU PRESERVE IT, THEY WILL COME. AND COME THEY have. More than 400,000 visitors thus far have journeyed through the museum.

"Of the myriad ways the bombing has transformed this place," said *New York Times* writer Jim Yardley in 2001, "perhaps one of the most unexpected and surprising is that Oklahoma City is now a tourist attraction....Before the bombing, Oklahoma City barely registered on the national consciousness....The worst thing that ever happened to the state became the best thing for its image and, oddly, its self-esteem."

That renewed confidence continues to have a big national impact.

"That's what the memorial effort is all about," Bob Johnson says. "It's the effect it had on the people who were touched by it, and I don't think that's just confined to the people of Oklahoma City. I think there were concentric rings of impact that radiated out across the world."



The bronze origami cranes suspended from the museum's second-floor ceiling represent the more than ten thousand paper cranes sent to the Oklahoma City mayor's office after the bombing. According to Japanese legend, cranes are a symbol of healing.

THE BEST DEFENSE

The Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism Goes on the Offensive to Protect Americans.

Operating virtually undetected in downtown Oklahoma City, the third arm of the Oklahoma City National Memorial, the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) has maintained a low profile. So far.

The MIPT, founded in April 2000, is directed by Dennis J. Reimer, a Medford native and former chief of staff of the United States Army. After retiring with thirty-seven years of active duty in summer 1999 and at the urging of then-governor Frank Keating, Reimer returned to his home state.

Memorial leaders envisioned the MIPT—with a separate board of directors and funding—as an organization complementary to the other, more visible components, the Oklahoma City National Memorial's symbolic garden and museum. By early 2004, the MIPT will occupy offices on the fourth and fifth floor of the Journal Record Building, much closer to both.

With a five-fold focus including research and

development, outreach, document collection, best practices, and providing a neutral forum, the twelve-person staff concentrates on its mission, "preventing and deterring terrorism and mitigating its effects."

Congressionally funded, the MIPT's efforts primarily focus on first responders, the police, public health, and emergency medical personnel at the frontlines of disaster. In addition to sponsoring a terrorism conference and the Dark Winter exercise in the Washington, D.C., region, the MIPT has been involved in research to improve the cumbersome protective ensemble worn by firemen, discover a new anthrax treatment, and protect the nation's 911 system.

The organization's list of activities grows with every passing year. Says Reimer, "I think there's what I call a community of the willing out there really trying to work on these issues and make a difference."

"If you go back and look at television history, the Oklahoma City bombing was one of the first things Americans watched from beginning to end," says Watkins. "That's why people can relate to this site, people who knew nobody and nothing about it. It is sad what happened, but it is incredible what rose out of this tragedy. And that is a global story, an international story that continues to be told."

Continuing to tell the story is one of the memorial center's most critical missions. Immediately after the attacks of September 11, 2001, the staff mobilized to help, placing a full-page expression of sympathy in the *New York Times* and conceiving an exhibit to highlight the common events. Since April 19, 2002, the museum has hosted the award-winning special exhibit, *A Shared Experience: 04.19.95-09.11.01*, also developed by Hillmann & Carr and containing five sections focusing on the experiences Oklahomans shared with New York City, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Some New York residents have made pilgrimages to Oklahoma City to see the exhibit, and the memorial center, for themselves.

Another pilgrim, Mark Andersen of San Diego, California, was captain of the Torrance, California, fire department at the time of the bombing, his unit one of many nationwide to support the rescue and recovery efforts. He returned to Oklahoma City for the first time in April.

"The memorial is exquisite, very tastefully done. I am really impressed with it," he says. "Of course it brought back a lot of memories, some painful, some very good."

Pennsylvanian John Blair also visited in April, for the third time.

"I was here shortly after it happened," he says. "They were just erecting the fence. The next time I was here, they were thinking about building a memorial. It was all rubble. So we decided to come see the memorial, and it is just spectacular." The gravity of the moment brings tears. "It is one of the saddest places I have been in the world. I have been to a lot of them, and this one really hurts because it is on our territory."

Like Blair, most visitors experience a range of emotions after going through the memorial center. Volunteer Sue Craig of Midwest City says, "I enjoy volunteering on the second floor, because it is near the end. People are ready to express their feelings. Many of them want to reach out, even hug me or touch me, and they'll say, 'Oh, thank you for volunteering here,' and 'This museum is beautiful; you've done such a wonderful job.'"

Family members and survivors feel the impact of the center even more acutely. Kerry Van Ess of Oklahoma City lost her father, HUD appraiser John Van Ess III, in the bombing. "I think the museum is incredibly nice," she says. "The room where they play the tape [the only known recording of the bomb, from a Water Resources Board hearing] is beyond shocking. I will say this, it's very effective."

A customer in the credit union that morning was among the

Above, from left: The Gallery of Honor features individual shadow boxes for each bombing victim containing personal objects chosen by their families; A Shared Experience: 04.19.95-09.11.01 was installed at the museum on April 19, 2002, and is designed to highlight common experiences of domestic terrorism victims; one of the final stops within the museum is a wall for visitors to share thoughts.





most severely injured. "Being on that third floor, it all hits you," says Susan Walton. "You're just bombarded by everything that was going on that day. I could stand it for fifteen, twenty minutes, and then I had to get out of there. But the second floor is more calming. I love the children's part and where you write on the wall."

Richard Williams, a trustee who has been active in the memorial process since the earliest days, says, "I am deeply proud of what that museum represents. It tells a story, a story of a struggle, a story of loss of life, a story of survivorship, a story of what happened here and how people responded to this city and this state in a manner no one had ever experienced before. It's difficult. We understand that. And yet it is tastefully done. It is accurate. It is historical."

ALTHOUGH WELL AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF the past, the Oklahoma City National Memorial staff looks toward the future, a future they believe begins with children.

"There's still a great deal to be done, particularly in the arena of education," says Bob Johnson. "The most important thing we can do is reach out and touch the lives of children. We can change the mindset among children about how issues are to be resolved and the senselessness of violence as a means of issue resolution."

To that end, the memorial center continuously strengthens its educational offerings. School groups receive discounted admission, and affordable curriculum materials including videos and books on nonviolence and conflict resolution are available to teachers upon request. Each spring, students are invited to compete for cash prizes

in an essay competition divided into several grade categories, the prize-winners announced at the April anniversary ceremony.

Watkins is most excited, though, about a distance learning program to be launched in late 2003. "We'll be able to connect with a DSL, computer, or fiber-optic line to a classroom in Baghdad or Tel Aviv and teach a class from the Oklahoma City National Memorial. We can have firemen here talking to firemen in New York City. We can have rescuers here talking to rescuers at the Pentagon."

From the earliest days following April 19, 2001, getting people connected and helping others is, and indeed always has been, what the Oklahoma City National Memorial represents best.

That, and remembering.

Kari Watkins says, "We built this place to last, so it's critical that we maintain it in the manner in which we built it. Our people know that, and they understand that mediocrity isn't acceptable."

She pauses.

"I think back to those 168 chairs. They died in a capacity for their country. I don't think mediocre would serve them." 

A Shared Experience: 04.19.95-09.11.01 will be on exhibit at the Oklahoma City National Memorial Center Museum through Labor Day. The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, 1 to 6 p.m. Sunday. Admission prices are \$7, adults; \$6, seniors; \$5, students, and children five and under, free. (405) 235-3313 or oklahomacitynationalmemorial.org.

Steffie Corcoran is senior editor at Oklahoma Today.

Monte's Chop House

3509 South Peoria Avenue • Tulsa

Hearty steaks cooked to perfection draw Tulsans to this outside patio. Worried about chilly nights to come? The deck has two propane heaters, a fireplace, and big curtains to close in all the warmth. (918) 744-9463, \$17-\$30.

BY BROOKE DEMETZ

PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT RAFFE

18

Outdoor Dining Favorites

PATIOS...THE PERFECT SPACES FOR
WHILING AWAY THESE SWEET SUMMER NIGHTS



Bean and Berry Bistro

2033 North Kickapoo • Shawnee

An elegant wood lattice covered with trumpet vines is a wonderful backdrop for the local bands that play on the patio Friday and Saturday nights. Try the mesquite chicken Thai wrap with your iced coffee. (405) 273-9691, \$2-\$5.

Chelino's

15 East California Avenue

• Oklahoma City

No view of the Bricktown canal is as delicious as the three-story fiesta-style deck at Chelino's. Try the sizzling fajitas available in beef, chicken, and shrimp. (405) 235-3533, \$7-\$12.

Copper

510 Dewey Avenue • Bartlesville

High atop the Inn at Price Tower, Copper's fifteenth and sixteenth-floor patios give altitude to modern cuisine with an attitude. Copper louvers block the sting of the natural elements so you can comfortably enjoy the pesto-crusted salmon. (918) 336-1000, \$14-\$17.

Crow Creek Tavern

3534 South Peoria Avenue

• Tulsa

This cozy spot was modeled after an English tavern, but the stone patio is what transports you to another world. The old-world ambiance is a favorite

for enjoying the fish and chips. (918) 749-9100, \$6-\$15.

Harmony House

208 South Seventh • Muskogee

Though vines and flowers adorn this covered wood patio, it is the bathtub-turned-water garden that exudes an enchanted charm at this cafe and bakery. (918) 687-8653, \$4-\$7.

Molly's Landing

Highway 66 • Catoosa

A courtyard overlooking the Verdigris River sets the scene for the 1872 rib-eye steaks at Molly's Landing. The thirteen-spice recipe was taken from the Chisholm Trail chuck wagons. (918) 266-7853, \$13-\$30.

The Mont

1300 Classen • Norman

The Mont's patio, with a water misting system and signature swirl margaritas, brings Oklahoma's heat down a good fifteen degrees. The patio is so popular, it's not unusual for patrons to endure an hour-long wait when immediate seating is available inside. (405) 329-3330, \$6-\$9.

On the Sidewalk Bar & Grill

114 West Randolph • Enid

With the opening of a sliding door, On the Sidewalk becomes an outdoor dining venue. A view of the Garfield County

courthouse lawn is enhanced by the grilled rack of lamb covered with a spicy Mediterranean sauce. (580) 234-3050, \$12-\$20.

Redrock Canyon Grill

9221 Lake Hefner Parkway

• Oklahoma City

Water meets earth at this rock patio with a view of Lake Hefner. The outdoor fireplace and casual Southwest cuisine warm up this fifteen-table outdoor retreat. Get your feet wet with the fresh fish of the day. (405) 749-1995, \$9-\$29.

Roxie's Roost

16471 Highway 10

• Tablequah

Rockin' bands and barbecue energize the deck and yard at Roxie's Roost. Known for its chopped beef barbecue, the deck against a cliff provides a lively atmosphere when live bands play every weekend. (918) 458-9531, \$6-\$15.

Sundance Café

Quartz Mountain Resort and Conference Center • Lone Wolf

Lit by twinkling lights and the moon shining off Lake Altus, the Sundance Café is the perfect place to eat everything from a chicken-fried steak to marinated Japanese salmon with soba noodles. The rock wall patio, arbors, and greenery provide the romantic vibe. (580) 563-3036, \$7-\$20.

Bellini's • Oklahoma City

Bellini's iron tables overlook a pond stocked with geese. The Capellini al Gamberetti, ten Mediterranean grilled shrimp with red bell peppers and basil pesto, is fantastic. (405) 848-1065, \$9-\$27.

The Grapevine • Tulsa

We heard it through the grapevine that this patio, under the shade of a black awning, offers some of the best salads in town. (918) 743-1870, \$7-\$25.

Mexico Joe's • Stillwater

Neon lights in the brick enclosed patio and Mexican hot link fajitas help spice things up. But don't sweat; ceiling fans and margaritas are sure to cool you down. (918) 787-5988, \$7-\$14.

Museum Café • Oklahoma City

Like painters mixing colors, the Museum Café at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art has mixed different styles of cuisine to create an American-French fusion. (405) 235-6262, \$5-\$22.

Portside Cafe • Foss

You can't get any closer to the signature catfish than those bobbing lakeside at Portside Cafe. (580) 592-4490, \$9-\$15.

Wild Fork • Tulsa

This popular patio faces Utica Square's garden and is adorned with two bronze sculptures of young girls feeding birds. (918) 742-0712, \$2-\$30.

ALONE

in the Reaches

They often work alone and in the most remote sections of Oklahoma. Their illegal counterparts are more heavily armed than they are, and their careers are often defined by prolonged episodes of watching and waiting. Without wildlife cops, Oklahoma wouldn't have its rich natural environment populated by a wealth of flora and fauna. Without them, our forests would be empty, our streams lifeless.

BY CHAD LOVE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM LUKER



Although there is much for game wardens to observe during the day, they also patrol at night, when many illegal activities happen under cover of darkness. Here, Officer Gary Wilcox at Camp Gruber in Braggs.

'We've been really lucky—we haven't had any wardens killed in a long time, but we've had a few assaulted and a few shot at.'



THE NOT-SO SYLVAN WOODS

A more bucolic scene could hardly be imagined. The deer, a magnificent, barrel-chested ten-point buck, stands aloof and proud in a field of verdant, newly sprouted winter wheat. It is early fall, and the deep russet hue of the buck's coat fairly glows in the buttery half-light of the fading evening sun.

The buck doesn't move when the faint sounds of an approaching vehicle become audible. It remains still as the sound's source becomes visible, a pickup, cruising slowly along the remote county road bordering the wheat field. The buck stays motionless as the truck suddenly stops and the passenger-side window is hastily rolled down, merely stares as a rifle barrel is slowly eased out the window. The buck doesn't flinch at the sharp report of the gunshot, doesn't fall when the bullet slams into its chest at twice the speed of sound, and doesn't bolt into the woods when flashing lights and men suddenly surround the truck.

It can't. It's already dead.

It's called a "dummy deer," and it's just one of the tools the wildlife cops of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation use to apprehend those who attempt to exploit the state's natural resources for illegal fun or black-market profit. Some of the more sophisticated models are, quite literally, robo-deer, with twitching tails and rotating heads for a more lifelike presentation.

Welcome to modern wildlife law enforcement, a field where the new technologies of forensic pathology, electronic surveil-

lance, and sophisticated sting operations intersect with the time-honored woodcraft of the traditional game warden.

These aren't your grandfather's game wardens, because these aren't your grandfather's sylvan woods. The national trade in illegal wildlife and wildlife parts is big business. Estimates on the actual dollar amount vary wildly, but most law enforcement agencies agree that traffic in illegal wildlife runs into the billions of dollars and is second only to the drug trade in illicit revenue production.

At first blush, Oklahoma seems an unlikely place for such criminal activity, but in reality there is an ongoing war being waged in our wild lands and on our waterways. Lucrative caviar smuggling rings, massive fish-netting operations, illegally harvested mussels destined for the Asian pearl industry, the theft of rare and endangered animals for the overseas pet trade, canned trophy hunts of exotic animals, illegal drug production on public land. These are just a few of the challenges facing modern game wardens, and, by extension, us as Oklahomans.

Most of us, whether we hunt and fish or not, know what a game warden is, or at least we think we do. He's the guy in green who checks licenses and makes sure hunters don't shoot things they're not supposed to.

In reality, the scope of the job goes far beyond checking licenses and monitoring bag limits. Game wardens are the state's environmental crime fighters, and they're just as likely



Patrolling near Fairfax, Officer Larry Green, left, notices smoke and fire in the distance. Inset from top: Green calls in a report; game warden Keith Green and his wife, Sherry; Officer Don Cole observes activity through his window-mounted scope.

There are, however, some fundamental differences between wardens and other cops. For one, during hunting season, many of the people they stop are as well armed as the wardens themselves.

"You always have that possibility of something going wrong, but most of the people we come in contact with are law-abiding hunters and anglers," says Maxwell. "We have most of our problems when we run into other people out in the woods breaking the law. We've been really lucky in that we haven't had any wardens killed in a long time, but we've had a few assaulted and a few shot at."

JOHN LAW OF THE BACKWOODS

While enforcement methods have evolved over the years, the fundamental mission of the state's game wardens—protecting Oklahoma's natural resources—has remained essentially unchanged for almost a century: In fact, much of what the modern conservation movement now advocates was first chronicled by Oklahoma game wardens at the turn of the century.

Writing in his biennial report to Governor R.L. Williams in 1918, state game and fish warden G.A. Smith opined that "enforcement of the law is only a part of the duty of the warden and his assistants, and I have endeavored to impress my assistants with the necessity of doing everything possible in the way of educating the people and in explaining the necessity of conservation laws."

Even back then, it seems, Oklahoma's wildlife cops were fighting battles that went beyond bag limits and license violations. Some eighty-five years later, Smith's successors have the same mission, but as Oklahoma's natural resources accrue a higher and higher value to the outside world, today's game wardens are making cases in ways G.A. Smith never dreamed of.

Of course, in 1918, Smith had only a handful of assistants scattered throughout the state. Today, the law enforcement division of the wildlife department is organized into eight districts with a captain, two lieutenants, and from eleven to fifteen wardens, with at least one warden in each county.

"We're charged with enforcing both state and federal wildlife laws, but the wardens can enforce any other state laws when they find them being broken," says assistant law enforcement chief Dennis Maxwell. As the second-ranking officer in the department, Maxwell, who works out of the wildlife department's headquarters in Oklahoma City, oversees the day-to-day operations of more than a hundred wardens. Maxwell never knows what cases his wardens may be involved in next.

"They can work anything from pollution cases and undercover stings to the export of prairie dogs for the pet trade," Maxwell says. "We're also getting more and more into the forensics side of wildlife investigations; we're working with a company here in Oklahoma that specializes in DNA testing on animals."

Most DNA cases involve illegally poached deer, and wardens utilize techniques that would make the crime fighters on *CSI* proud. One of the most common violations involves hunters illegally shooting a deer with a firearm and then claiming it was shot with a bow.

to make an arrest on illegal exportation of a box turtle as they are to bust a deer poacher.

Wardens are police officers, first and foremost, but they also are wedded to the land in a unique way other law enforcement officers aren't. Their jobs are dictated by the ebb and flow of the seasons, and they are attuned to that natural cadence as surely as the urban cop is dialed in to the diverse rhythm of the city.

Paul Cornett, a thirty-nine-year-old warden responsible for patrolling Woodward County, has been following those scheduled rhythms for almost nine years now. Summer means warm, humid evenings on area lakes and rivers, checking fishing licenses and patrolling public lands. The first hint of turning leaves and cool fall breezes means a shift to the woods as hunting seasons begin and droves of Oklahoma hunters take to the fields.

In September it's dove. October, November, and December bring deer, quail, waterfowl, turkey, and small game. The bitter cold of late winter means no less activity. Predator hunting, quail, late-season waterfowl. The arrival of spring heralds the turkey season, and the annual white bass count explodes in Oklahoma rivers with huge numbers of anglers quietly perched on state rivers and lakes. And through it all, Oklahoma wardens are in the field, part of the natural order of things.

"It's certainly a job you do for the love of it," says Cornett. "We're not doing it for the pay; it's just the satisfaction of knowing you made a difference. People are counting on us to be out there watching over those resources."

The two different hunting methods have different seasons, bag limits, and restrictions. However, wardens have ways around that subterfuge in sophisticated lead residue tests they can perform on deer literally in the suspect's pickup bed or car trunk.

If that's not enough to prove a crime, wardens have a host of other tests to determine just when, where, and how an animal died, including eye dilation rates, carcass temperature readings, and even muscular contraction tests to determine how long an animal has been dead.

"Those things are useful for determining if an animal may have been shot illegally at night," says Maxwell.

Wardens patrol lonely, isolated stretches of the state, perfect places for all sorts of suspicious activity. Clandestine drug operations pose particularly hazardous problems for wardens, who, more often than not, patrol alone. Even in counties with more than one warden, they don't usually work together. Backup is a long ways away, and run-ins with common criminals are always a hazard.

Besides the wildlife itself, wardens are increasingly running into criminals who have found a lucrative market carting off the very plants and rocks that make up Oklahoma's wildlife habitat. The suburbanite's desire for a landscaped yard is apparently creating a profit motive—and one more headache for wardens.

Recently, two southeastern Oklahoma wardens discovered a group of men with semis and front-end loaders taking tons of rock from public land, apparently destined for lawns and gardens in the Dallas area. Plants for the medicinal trade, such as purple coneflowers, are also fair game for illegal plant collectors.

Another potential problem for wardens is the ever-increasing number of black bears in the southeastern part of the state. Bear gallbladders are a hot commodity in Asian medicinal markets, and Maxwell believes it's just a matter of time before state wardens are embroiled in yet another international poaching ring. "We haven't had any problems yet," says Maxwell, "but I think we're going to if bears keep expanding."

WILD THINGS

Not all the flora and fauna taken illegally is consumed or rendered into folk remedies. Some Oklahoma wildlife suffers simply because it's cute.

"We've worked a lot of cases on the illegal pet trade," says Maxwell. "It's amazing what people will try to keep as pets. We've had cases on some people trying to take prairie dogs for the overseas pet trade. Apparently prairie dogs are a popular pet in Europe and Asia. We've also had some cases on box turtles. We ran an undercover operation near McAlester on a group of people who were taking three or four hundred box turtles every couple of weeks down into Texas and selling them as pets."

Perhaps the most visible sting operation wardens participate in is the infamous dummy deer setup, where wardens place a life-size stuffed deer in a prominent hunting location, then wait for the bullets to start flying.

"We first started using dummy deer in the early Eighties," says Captain David Kirk, the chief of sprawling District 8, which spans a twelve-county area from Boise City in the extreme

western Panhandle to Kay County in northern Oklahoma. "But we got some real teeth in the law when legislation passed in the mid-1980s that gave shooting a dummy deer the same penalty as shooting a real deer."

Kirk, who oversees District 8 from the wildlife department's regional office in Woodward, says the dummy deer is a warden's single best tool for targeting road hunters. "We use them when we have a specific complaint from landowners or other hunters who are having problems with people poaching deer from the road."

The degree to which poachers respond to the faux deer varies from vehicle to vehicle. Some poachers will take a single shot, then attempt to speed off when they realize they've been had, while others fire shot after shot at the seemingly superhuman buck that simply refuses to die.

"One night we had a guy shoot six arrows into our dummy deer, one after the other, and all the while his partner is yelling to him, 'Shoot it again! It's moving, it's moving!'"

Kirk also says the dummy deer program curtails poaching even when wardens aren't using it.

"One of the biggest known poachers in the Panhandle came up to me one day and was bragging that we needed to start using western Oklahoma dummy deer because he could spot those eastern Oklahoma dummy deer out in the fields," says Kirk. "The funny thing is, we hadn't been putting out any dummy deer; what he'd been seeing were real deer he was afraid to shoot."

The dummy deer program has been so successful that most wardens now have a menagerie of bullet-riddled veteran animals, including dummy turkeys and bobcats. Kirk says airplanes, remote cameras, and sophisticated night-vision equipment are also important tools of the trade.

"During deer season, we're up in the plane at night, looking for spotlights," says Kirk. "When we see a violator, we'll then coordinate with ground units to stop them. We're up there watching."

PEARLS WITH PRICE

Most Oklahoma residents, if they've ever dipped a toe in a pond or river, are familiar with mussels. The diminutive mollusks inhabit virtually every body of water in the state. Oklahoma has a wide variety of mussel species, especially in the streams and rivers of northeast Oklahoma, where some grow the thick, hard shells perfect for cultivating another mollusk specialty—pearls.

"[Poachers] take mussel shells from the creeks and rivers in eastern Oklahoma and sell them to buyers here in the United States," says District 1 law enforcement chief captain Larry Manering of Pawhuska. Manering's district encompasses the northeastern and north-central tier of counties and is heavily involved in the aquatic side of wildlife enforcement.

"They in turn sell the shells to the Japanese, who cut the shells, put them in a large industrial tumbler to smooth, and round them into small balls. Those small balls are then implanted into live oysters to make cultured pearls."

Chances are very good that the string of exotic Japanese pearls you see glimmering from behind the jeweler's case



Officer Brady May's territory includes the popular Illinois River. Inset from top: A young fisherman holds the caviar-producing paddlefish, also known as the spoonbill; May inspects the dummy 'robo-deer' wardens use to catch unlawful deer hunters.

might well have gotten its start in a small eastern Oklahoma creek bed. Collecting mussel shells is legal but regulated and has strict size limits. The problems begin when outlaw collectors start taking mussels smaller than the law allows. In 1995, one particularly brazen mussel poacher was stopped with over 15,000 pounds of illegal shells.

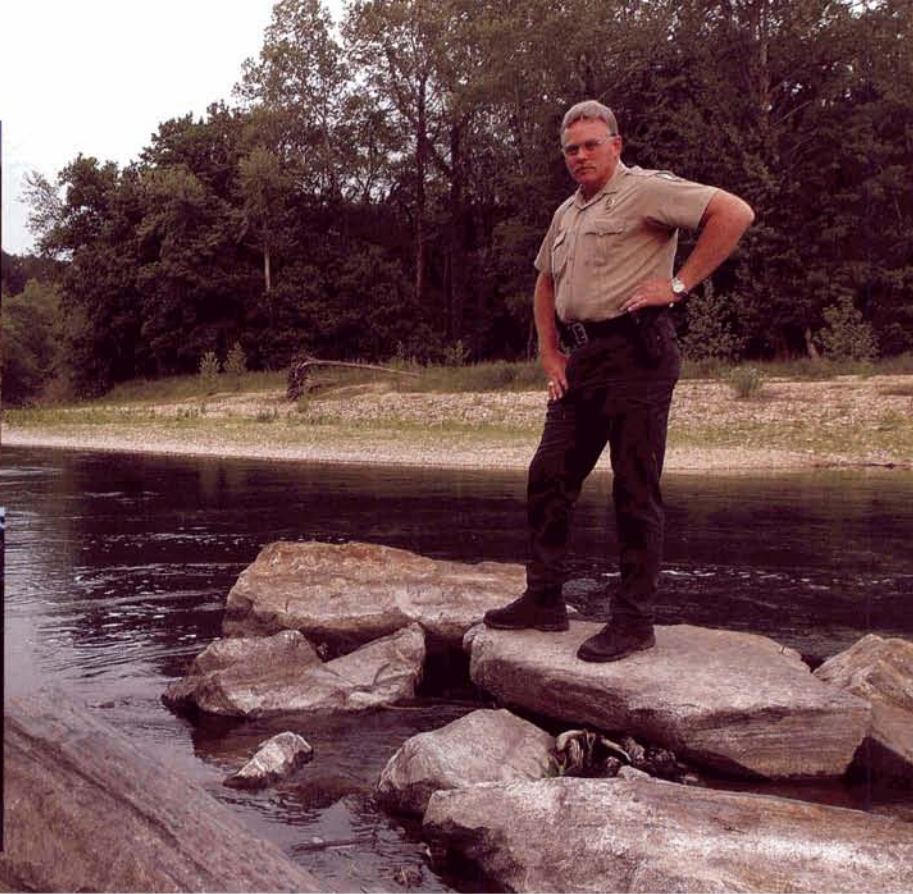
"That business has dropped off a little bit, but we still have problems with people taking mussel shells that are too small or taking too many and trying to send them out of state without going through a buyer here," Manering says.

But the global connections of Sooner mussels pale in comparison to the international intrigue spawned by another of Oklahoma's piscatorial oddities.

ANOTHER KIND OF BLACK GOLD

On the surface, there would seem to be no connection between the fall of the Soviet Union, international trade embargoes, and a placid, primitive Oklahoma fish species virtually no one has heard of. But in today's global economy, events half a world away can have a direct—and sometimes devastating—effect in our own backyards.

Throw greed and opportunity into the mix, and the result reads like something out of an off-kilter thriller, a bizarre mélange of Russian caviar smugglers, homegrown poachers, and a fish that grows as large as a man but only eats stuff you can't see without a microscope. And it's all playing out right here on the riverbanks of Oklahoma.



To understand why, we must first travel to the former Soviet Union, with a side trip to Iran thrown in for good measure.

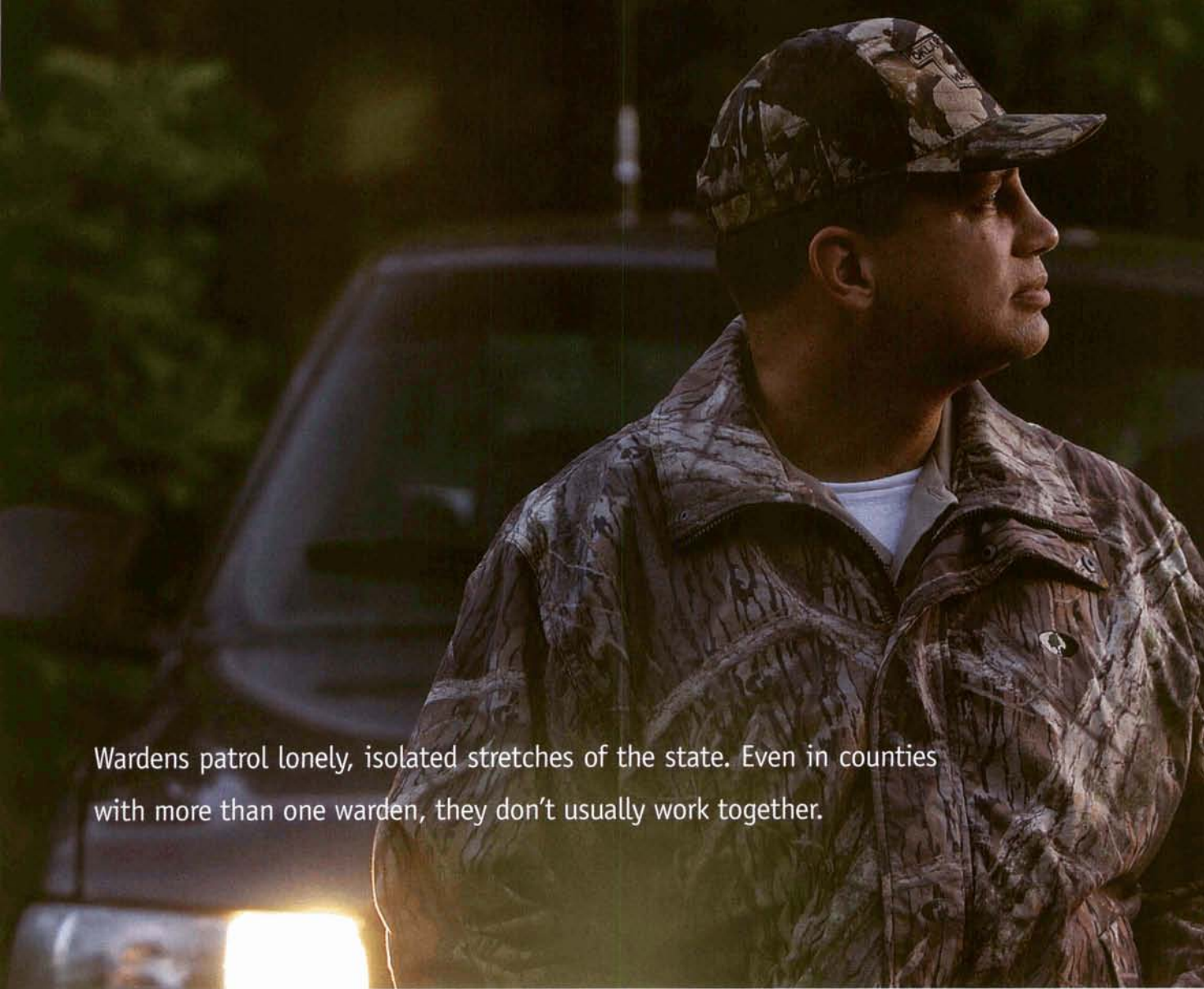
At some point in the distant epicurean history of the world, the eating of raw fish eggs became synonymous with class and privilege. Historically, the world's finest caviar has always come from the various species of sturgeon inhabiting the rivers and drainages of the Caspian Sea. And while the Soviet regime may have had its problems in other areas, it did know how to keep the caviar flowing without completely exhausting the resource.

The irony of a theoretically classless Communist nation supplying the world with a product generally reserved for the wealthiest class of the capitalistic free-market countries probably wasn't lost on the Soviets, but they were making too much money to let ideology get in the way of a good thing.

Of course, all good things must end, and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 heralded the end of a stable, if exploitative, Caspian Sea caviar industry. With no state control, the Caspian became an environmental free-fire zone, and in a few short years, Caspian Sea sturgeon populations plummeted, decimated by rampant overharvest and continuing pollution.

However, while sturgeon populations may have been taking a nosedive, populations of rich people with a yen for caviar weren't. Caviar companies had to find an alternate source to meet that insatiable demand, and they had to find it fast. They discovered it swimming through the deep, slow-moving rivers of eastern Oklahoma.

The paddlefish, as the saying goes, is one of those unfortunate creatures that looks like it was designed by committee. It is a large fish, often growing to more than a hundred pounds and six feet in length, with an outlandish, flat spatula-like ap-



Wardens patrol lonely, isolated stretches of the state. Even in counties with more than one warden, they don't usually work together.

pendage protruding straight from its snout. Like certain species of whale, it is a filter feeder, which means it eats by cruising through the water with its gaping mouth open, trapping plankton and other minuscule water creatures. Historically, it occupied the Missouri and Mississippi river drainages, including the river systems of eastern Oklahoma. Its odd protuberance is the basis for its more descriptive local name, "spoonbill."

But it's not what the paddlefish looks like or tastes like that interests some. It's what it produces. Basically, paddlefish swim around with bellies full of gold. Unfortunately for the paddlefish, through some trick of biology, evolution, or environment, its eggs make great caviar. So good, in fact, that it can be labeled as Russian caviar and virtually no one besides caviar experts or DNA technicians can tell the difference.

Even with this eerie and potentially profitable similarity to sturgeon roe, the paddlefish may have remained an obscure, prehistoric oddity if not for the unpredictable whirlwinds of geopolitics. In 1987, the Reagan Administration enacted a trade embargo against Iran in response to that country's support of state-sponsored terrorism.

The embargo's effect on terrorism was debatable. Its effect on Oklahoma paddlefish was not. Iran, it turned out, was one of the few countries other than the Soviet Union with a viable caviar industry. Taking that market away from U.S. caviar importers resulted in a supply-and-demand scenario that instantly turned the homely paddlefish into a cash machine with gills.

The result, says eastern Oklahoma game wardens, was an all-out assault on state paddlefish populations.

"It's just an absolute war to keep these people from coming in here and taking our fish," says Lieutenant Keith Green, a Craig County warden and the wildlife department's point man on busting paddlefish poachers. "We spend a tremendous amount of time on it, literally hundreds and hundreds of hours of surveillance."

Green, who lives in Vinita, is a supervisor who oversees the Grand Lake-Neosho River system, an area of the state where the heaviest paddlefish poaching activity takes place. He's testified in several federal paddlefish cases that have resulted in major convictions.

"When our problem really started was with the embargo against Iran," says Green. "And that's when the caviar rings



Officer Gary Wilcox, left, at Camp Gruber in Braggs in northeastern Oklahoma. Inset, from top: May inspects the fish caught with nets on the Illinois River; Officers Don Cole and Brek Henry check the fishing license of a Broken Arrow angler.

entire eastern Oklahoma river system stocked with paddlefish. If there's a lot of water going through dams, paddlefish will move upstream and congregate below them to feed and spawn, and that's where snaggers can really take a toll."

Snagging is one of the two primary ways poachers take paddlefish. Because a paddlefish's food source is microscopic, you obviously can't fish for them in the traditional sense of the word. Instead, you snag them. In a nutshell, snagging is casting a bare hook out into the water and hoping it runs into a paddlefish as you reel it back in. Not exactly a high-probability venture. Except, of course, when the paddlefish stack up like cordwood during spring spawning runs. Snagging paddlefish is legal for noncommercial sport fishing and is a time-honored spring tradition in northeastern Oklahoma, but illegal snaggers take far more than what is allowed by law.

The other way to catch paddlefish, and by far the most effective, is setting up large nets in those same areas.

"In the spring and winter, we have people come in from out of state who set up the nets," says Green, "and that's what can really do the damage to paddlefish populations."

To counter that threat, wardens log thousands of hours of surveillance on Oklahoma waterways, often keeping tabs on poachers for years at a time before making arrests.

"We caught one bunch of guys that over a two-year period were paid \$250,000 for Oklahoma eggs from a buyer in Tennessee," says Green. "We finally got them leaving Oklahoma with paddlefish eggs, but we did three years of surveillance on them to get it."

Convictions in that case resulted in a \$50,000 fine and twenty-four months in a federal prison, but according to Manering, paddlefish remain a target.

"It's big business," says Manering. "People come from all over the country to snag paddlefish here because we have the best paddlefish population in the nation. The outlaws come because of that and because they know that where there are a lot of fish, there are a lot of eggs. We've been conducting extremely intensive enforcement, and what we've done is shut down much of the paddlefish trade, but as long as we've got paddlefish, there will always be people there trying to get eggs."

As long as Oklahoma has what the world craves, whether caviar, pearls, or prairie dogs, there will be criminals here and abroad trying to steal those native treasures. For better or worse, our state's natural resources now have a booth in the worldwide bazaar, and there is a clamoring market for those products.

The objective for Oklahoma's game wardens will be, as it has always been, to balance the wants of the world against the needs of the fish and wildlife of our state. Meeting this ongoing challenge will be the lasting legacy of those who protect our environment.

Chad Love is a writer living in Woodward. His last article for the magazine was March/April 2003's cover piece, "The Story of Wind."

started substituting our paddlefish for the Russian and Iranian caviar. We've even had cases where Oklahoma paddlefish eggs were shipped to Russia, labeled as Russian caviar, shipped back to the states, and then sold as sturgeon caviar."

One pound of processed paddlefish roe can sell for almost \$300. Ironically, many caviar sellers tout paddlefish as an "environmentally responsible" alternative to Russian caviar. According to Green, that's not quite true. "There's a lot of concern nationwide for paddlefish populations," he says. "There's been a tremendous amount of overharvesting in states that allow commercial fishing."

Green says not only are Oklahoma poachers sending paddlefish eggs to Russia, but Russians are coming here. "We've got a big case right now where the federal government has indicted a number of Russian importers who were over here buying paddlefish eggs," says Green.

"We have one of the very best mature paddlefish populations in the country, and that's why Oklahoma is such a target for these poachers," says Green. "Paddlefish spawn naturally in the Grand Lake-Neosho River system, and that basically keeps the



A plate of pierogi and a medieval book bindery are standard fare at Bozena Polish Restaurant in Fort Gibson.

BOZENA'S

RESTAURANT & BOOKBINDERY

BY SHAUNA LAWYER STRUBY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM LUKER

IN MANY WAYS, THE STORY OF BOZENA'S OWNERS, Bozena and Zbigniew Niebieszczanski, is the epitome of the American dream. Given forty-eight hours to leave Poland due to Zbigniew's union work with the Polish solidarity movement, the couple and their three sons emigrated to Germany in 1983, then America a year later.

"We come as political refugees. I had a passport one way from the Polish government," says Zbigniew, schooled in the finely crafted European method of bookbinding.

Zbigniew's trade took the family to Texas, Vermont, and Muskogee before they settled in Fort Gibson in 1989, choosing the historic town for its good schools. Their new friends were introduced to Bozena's aromatic Polish food, and after three years of hearing, "You should open a restaurant," the couple finally agreed.

With virtually no restaurant experience, the Niebieszczanskis opened Bozena Polish Restaurant in November 1992 in an abandoned shopping center.

In the years since, the restaurant—still located in the shopping center but now with Zbigniew's bookbindery next door—has become a favorite among locals and travelers alike.

Steven Lantier is an Oklahoma City anesthesiologist who discovered Bozena's on a trip to Fort Gibson three years ago. He and his family visit the restaurant as often as possible.

"It's truly European, and their food hasn't been acculturated with our style yet," says Lantier. "It's done with love. I know that sounds corny, but Bozena really does a great job."

Bozena's décor is an eclectic mix of European artifacts, pop-culture memorabilia, and family photos, all intertwined with colorful lights and fountains. Furniture ranges from elaborately carved wooden chairs to retro Seventies chic.

As Zbigniew loves to remind customers, their restaurant serves the only authentic Polish food he's been able to find in the five-state region.

Polish food is actually a blending of cuisines from Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Russia. The menu features eighteen traditional Polish dishes, and Bozena credits the restaurant's success to an uncompromising approach toward freshness.

"You must make it fresh. Sometimes it takes longer, but it is better for it," she says. "I tell people this is not a fast-food restaurant."

She adds that diners sometimes hesitate before trying her dill pickle soup. Once they've sampled it, however, they're hooked (see page 61 for the recipe). It's comfort food for the soul, easily constituting a meal in itself.

As Bozena Polish Restaurant and Artur Bookbinding International provide a window into other countries and cultures, the Niebieszczanskis have made Oklahoma their permanent home. And in 2001, the couple wrote another chapter in their ongoing American dream. They became American citizens. 

Bozena Polish Restaurant is located at 1115 East Poplar Street in Fort Gibson. The restaurant is open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Reservations are encouraged. (918) 478-4404. For Artur Bookbinding International, (888) 372-4253 or biblerepair.com.



TIES THAT BIND

Almost a year after Bozena's opened, Zbigniew Niebieszczanski opened his bookbindery, Artur Bookbinding International, literally a door away from his family's Polish restaurant.

But Poland seems distant in this cozy space, where Gregorian chants echo and set the tone for Niebieszczanski's delicate book repair work, painstakingly conducted among medieval suits of armor, ancient printing presses, and stacks of old bibles, books, and documents.

With more than 1,600 clients over the last decade, Niebieszczanski specializes in repairing bibles, cookbooks, first editions, and photo albums. Though most of his customers are regional, his website has drawn business nationwide.

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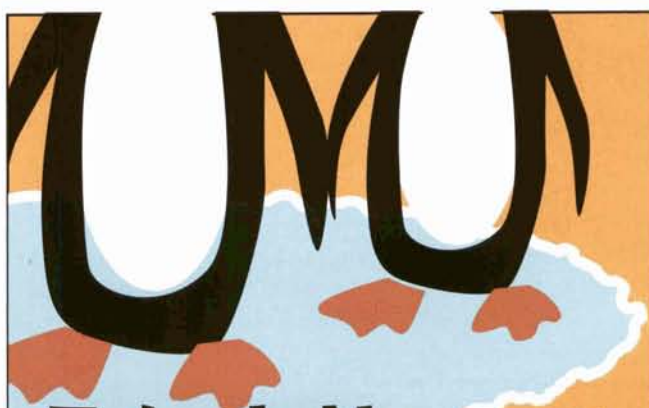
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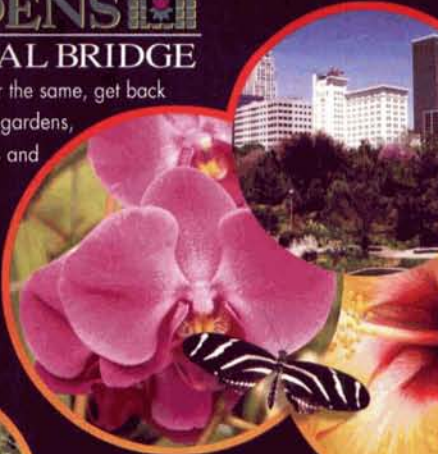
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GETAWAY

GUIDE

VIEWS FROM THE TOP

Just you, the view, and the possibilities.

Oklahoma's scenic vistas can quickly put life's stresses in perspective—even for the type A's among us. Thankfully, reflection, tranquility, and contemplation are welcome byproducts of our state's natural beauty.

The appeal of the eye-catching panoramas atop the 4,973-foot Black Mesa and along the awe-inspiring Talimena Scenic Byway are obvious. But it sometimes takes a professional to see what others might overlook. Two *Oklahoma Today* contributing photographers, R.E. Lindsey and John Elk III, used their well-trained grasp of the visual to recommend a few of Oklahoma's most breathtaking views. Seeing is believing.

BY BROOKE DEMETZ

Black Mesa, the highest point in the state, is located in Oklahoma's Panhandle, just steps away from New Mexico and Colorado. The mountain is within the Black Mesa Nature Preserve fifteen miles north of Black Mesa State Park.



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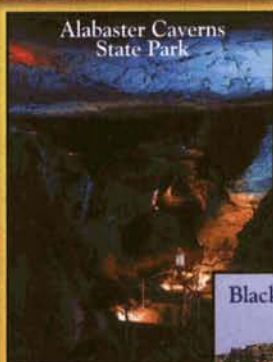
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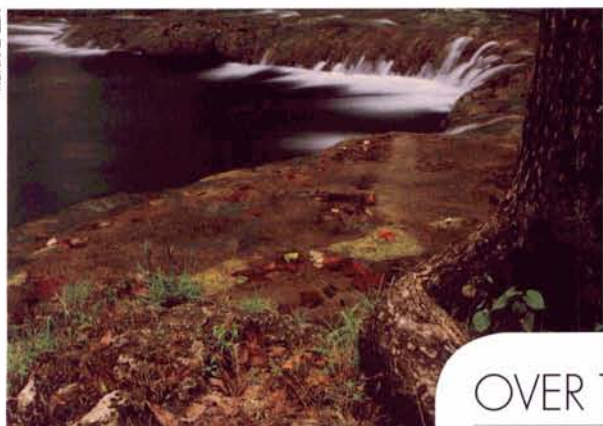
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OVER THE RIVER

The Lowdown on Beavers Bend

Approximately three hundred feet above the bend of the Mountain Fork River, the Cedar Bluff at **Beavers Bend Resort Park** (580/494-6300; oklahomaparks.com) near Broken Bow mixes pine hardwood forests with a cool riverbed. "Hands down, it is the prettiest part of the park," says park naturalist Kristi Silvey. Lug along those hiking boots—the best vista requires a trek to the top of the David Boren Hiking Trail. If the heat is overwhelming, rent a canoe or kayak from **Beavers Bend River Floats** (580/494-6070). Overnight accommodations include the **Lakeview Lodge** (580/494-6179; \$80-\$110) and **Beavers Bend Cabins and Camping** (580/494-6300; \$68-\$130).



JOHN ELK III

JOHN ELK III



Grand Canyons

Known for its subterranean caves, **Alabaster Caverns State Park** (580/621-3381; oklahomaparks.com) near Freedom offers wonderful views of nature's outside—and inner—beauties. The park overlooks Cedar Canyon, a spectacular ravine filled with red cedars, cottonwoods, and native elms. The best view of the canyon is a scenic overlook west of the park office. R.E. Lindsey says, "The red and white earth against the blue sky and green grass" attracted him to the area. Feeling brave? In addition to steaks and burgers, **Stables Cafe and Cantina** (580/621-3257) sometimes serves up rattlesnake. Overnight options include the batty experience of **Cave Camping** (580/621-3381; \$45), a small cave equipped with pallet-style sleeping areas.

Blue Mountain's Majesty

Mount Scott in the **Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge** (580/429-3222) towers high above the blue oases of Lake Lawtonka and Lake Elmer Thomas. The mountain, 2,464 feet tall and a 2.2-mile drive up the winding 360-degree road, contains hundreds of granite boulders ready for exploration. "On a clear day, you can see fifty-plus miles," says R.E. Lindsey. Don't miss Picture Rock, a turnout on the road up the mountain with a crystal-clear view to the West. Try the **Doris Campground** (580/429-3222) for down-to-earth digs, and if you tire of camp grub, venture to the neighboring town of Meers for longhorn beef hamburgers at the **Meers Store** (580/429-8051).

R.E. LINDSEY



JOHN ELK III

URBAN FOREST

Downtown Oklahoma City has a skyline with more than thirty high-rises, but John Elk recommends the view from the Bricktown Canal. "It is a perfect example of the prairie meeting the city," he says. The mile-long canal can be toured by **Water Taxi** (405/234-8263; \$5.50), a forty-minute coast that passes the Bass Pro Shop construction and the first five pieces of Paul Moore's *Oklahoma Centennial Land Run Monument*. Oklahoma City's entertainment district, Bricktown features more than thirty restaurants and several hotels, including the **Renaissance** (405/228-8000; \$139-\$209; renaissancehotels.com) and the **Westin Oklahoma City** (405/235-2780; \$189-\$799; westinokc.com).

EVENTS GUIDE

A Guide to Activities and Events Statewide

ANADARKO

Honor America Day July 4, Randlett Park. (405) 247-6651

American Indian Exposition Aug 4-9, Fairgrounds. (405) 247-6651

Wichita Annual Dance Aug 14-17, Wichita Tribal Park. (405) 247-2425

BARTLESVILLE

Bill Doenges Memorial Stadium July 3-6, Glen Winget Baseball Tournament, (918) 335-2133. Aug 22-26, American Legion World Series, (918) 333-1105

Community Center Adams Blvd & Cherokee Ave. July 17-20, The Sound of Music. July 21-Aug 1, Arts Encounters 2003. (918) 337-2787

Allan Houser: Water July 4-Aug 31, Price Tower Arts Center. (918) 336-4949

Heart of Town Market July 5, 12, 19, 26, Frank Phillips & Johnstone. (918) 336-2468

BRISTOW

Fourth of July Celebration July 4, Lake Masena. (918) 367-5151

Annual IPRA/ACRA Rodeo Aug 8-9, Rodeo Grounds. (918) 367-3469

Western Heritage Day & Parade Aug 9, Downtown. (918) 367-5151

CHICKASHA

Festival of Freedom July 4, Shannon Springs Park. (405) 222-6028

Jimbo Moddrell Memorial Make Promises Happen Rally & Poker Run July 12-13, Elk's Lodge. (405) 224-3132

Swap Meet July 17-20, Muscle Car Ranch. (405) 222-4910

DUNCAN

Simmons Center 800 Chisholm Trail Parkway. July 2, Sweet Land of Liberty: Free Patriotic Performance. July 26, Dehydrator Bike Race. (580) 252-2900

Bluegrass Jam July 3-5, Shady Oaks RV Park. (580) 255-7042

Water Garden Society Pond Tour July 19, Citywide. (580) 255-7842

Arts Explosion July 21-25, Fairgrounds Exhibition Building. (580) 255-3231

EDMOND

Historical Society 431 S Boulevard. July 1-19, American WW II Posters: Social Influence of Wartime Information. Aug 5-30, Historic Schools of Edmond. (405) 340-0078

Libertyfest July 1-4, Downtown. (405) 340-2527

Shakespeare in the Park July 10-Aug 31, Hafer Park. (405) 340-1222

Arcadia Lake Sweep Aug 15-16, Arcadia Lake. (405) 216-7470

ELK CITY

Civic Center 1016 Airport Industrial Rd. Aug 15-16, Route 66 Square Dance Jamboree, (580) 225-0207. Aug 23, Nat'l Junior Heifer Show, (580) 225-2207

Elk City Fireworks Display July 4, Ackley Park. (580) 225-0207

Model Helicopter Fly-In July 11-13, Model Airpark. (580) 225-2253

Rodeo of Champions Parade Aug 30, Downtown. (580) 225-0207

Rodeo of Champions Aug 30-31, Beutler Brothers Arena. (580) 225-0207

BATTER UP IN BROKEN ARROW

Youth Baseball Series a Big Hit

Ready to score a home run with the family this summer? Load up the gang and head to Broken Arrow to catch top-notch youth teams from across the country and around the globe vie for world series baseball championships.

Triple A-level United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) World Series finals kick off the events roster, running July 13 through 20, with 1,200 thirteen year olds from twenty-six states competing for the title.

The state-of-the-art Broken Arrow High School stadium is the venue for opening night ceremonies. Skydivers bring the first-pitch balls down from the heavens, and sports speakers headline the program. Once the competition begins, three hundred games are set for the first two days to determine seeding, then teams go into double-elimination bracket play.

Hungry for more action? A few days later, from July 25 through August 2, Indian Springs Sports Complex welcomes the Continental Amateur Baseball Association (CABA) World Series for ages eight through fifteen. Teams from around the world compete in their age brackets in three divisions—Ultimate and Quality in the competitive category and House in the recreational class.

Besides teams from the continental United States, Hawaii, and Alaska, fans can cheer on squads from Puerto Rico, Brazil, Mex-

ico, Canada, and Guam. A number of these young competitors have made their way to the big leagues. Be on the lookout—the next Sammy Sosa might hit his first home run here.

Buy your peanuts, grab some Cracker Jacks, and make your way north to watch these star athletes from all over flex their muscles, swing their bats, and round the bases. Summertime baseball is exciting in every language. —Joan Rhine

The Triple-A USSSA World Series runs July 13-20 throughout Broken Arrow (918/232-5905; ussabaseball.org). The CABA World series is July 25-August 2 at the Indian Springs Sports Complex in Broken Arrow. Games run continually from 8 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. (918/251-1015; bayouthbaseball.com).



ENID

Oakwood Mall 4125 W Owen K. Garriott Rd. July 18-20, Made in America Trade Show. Aug 22-24, 2nd Annual Family Fun Fest. (580) 234-3549

Fourth of July Majors Tournament July 2-6, David Allen Memorial Ballpark. (580) 548-0396

USA Wrestling Kids Nat'l Championship July 2-6, Chisholm Trail Expo Center. (580) 237-0238

Fourth of July Celebration July 4, Leonardo's Discovery Warehouse. (580) 233-2787

Horse Show July 4, Meadowlake Horse Arena. (580) 233-7587

Vegetable Show & Ice Cream Social July 8, Hoover Building, Garfield County Fairgrounds. (580) 233-2439

First Friday's Cinema in the City July 11, Aug 1, Bank of Oklahoma. (918) 336-8708

The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe July 18, Oklahoma Bible Academy. (800) 324-8488

The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas July 18-26, Gaslight Theatre. (580) 234-2307

EUFAULA

35th Annual Fireworks Spectacular July 4, Eufaula Cove. (918) 689-2791

Whole Hawg Days July 25-26, Downtown. (918) 689-2791

Piecemakers Quilt Show Aug 30, #9 Community Center. (918) 452-3232

GUTHRIE

Lazy E Arena 9600 Lazy E Dr. July 11-13, USTR Oklahoma Championships Team Roping. July 25-27, Team Roping. (405) 282-7433

Int'l Banjo College, July 19-20, Nat'l Four-String Banjo Hall of Fame Museum. (405) 260-1323

NORMAN

HMS Pinafore July 1-13, Sooner Theater. (405) 364-8962

Norman Day July 4, Reaves Park. (405) 366-5472

Junior Zookeeper Summer Camp July 14-18, 21-25, Aug 4-8, Little River Zoo. (405) 366-7229

Midsummer Nights' Fair July 18-19, Lions Park. (405) 329-4523

Faculty Show July 26-Aug 30, Firehouse Art Center. (405) 329-4523

Celebration of Quilts July 31-Aug 2, Lloyd Noble Center. (405) 321-5892

Road Show Aug 2-31, Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History. (405) 325-4712

OKLAHOMA CITY

Blue Door 2805 N McKinley Ave. July 3, Red Dirt Rangers & Friends. July 13, Tracy Grammer. July 18, Tom Russell. Aug 2, Blue House. Aug 23, Tanya Savory. (405) 524-0738

City Arts Center 3000 General Pershing Blvd. July 17-Aug 1, Babe, the Sheep Pig. Aug 28-31, Winnie the Pooh. (405) 951-0011

Civic Center Music Hall 201 W Walker. July 16-Aug 9, Forever Plaid. July 22-26, Footloose. Aug 5-9, The Wizard of Oz. Aug 19-23, Smokey Joe's Café. (405) 524-9312



BOZENA'S DILL PICKLE SOUP

3 large dill pickles (grated)
32 ounces chicken stock
4 large potatoes (cubed)
1 medium carrot (cubed)
1/2 cup chopped, cooked chicken
1/2 cup whipping cream
Optional: Maggi bottled seasoning, dried or fresh dill, salt, and pepper

Combine the chicken stock, cubed potatoes, and carrot and bring to a boil. When the potatoes are cooked through, add the chicken and pickles and cook for one minute. Remove the soup mixture from the heat and add whipping cream, stirring the ingredients thoroughly. Pickle juice can be added for a stronger dill taste. Sprinkle with dill and serve with a dollop of sour cream on top and slices of fresh bread on the side. Makes four eight-ounce servings.

RECIPE FROM BOZENA POLISH RESTAURANT (PAGE 52).

TOM LUKER

Omniplex 2100 NE 52nd St. July 1-10, Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure. July 1-Aug 15, Summer Exploration Program. July 11, Top Speed. July 12-Aug 10, Tonic Show. (405) 602-6664

State Fair Park I-44 & NW 10th St. July 23-Aug 3, Greater Hunter Jumper Horse Show. Aug 15-17, Shootout Barrel Racing. (405) 948-6704

Comic Potential July 1-12, Carpenter Square Theater. (405) 232-6500

Water Garden Tour July 12-13, Citywide. (405) 721-2736

Bullnanza Aug 1-2, Ford Center. (405) 282-7433

Balloon Fest 2003 Aug 8-9, Wiley Post Airport. (405) 475-7006

Family Fun Festival Aug 15-16, Washington Park. (405) 424-5243

Odyssey Astronomy Club Public Star Party Aug 29-30, Lake Stanley Draper Soccer Fields. (405) 899-4016

PAWNEE

Fairgrounds 510 Memorial. Aug 2-7, Pawnee Bill Trail Ride, Cattle Drive, and Wagon Train. Aug 7-9, Pawnee Bill Memorial Rodeo. Aug 9, Pawnee Bill Memorial Smoke Off. (918) 762-2108

Pawnee Indian Veterans Homecoming Powwow July 3-6, Football Field. (918) 762-2448

Fourth of July Celebration July 4, Downtown. (918) 762-2108

PONCA CITY

Freedom Festival 2003 July 4, Lake Ponca. (580) 763-8051

Annual Airshow July 12-16, GOOFS Field. (866) 763-8092

Southern Classic Horse Show July 18-19, Busy B Arena & Stables. (580) 763-8051

Grand National MotoCross Races July 29-Aug 2, Blevin Park. (580) 762-5502

101 Ranch Wild West Rodeo Aug 13-16, 101 Rodeo Arena. (580) 763-8092

101 Ranch Wild West Rodeo Parade Aug 16, Downtown. (866) 763-8092

Ponca Powwow Aug 28-31, White Eagle Park. (580) 762-8104

SHAWNEE

Red, White & Blue Celebration July 4, Expo Center. (405) 275-9780

Woodcarvers Show Aug 5-29, Santa Fe Depot Museum. (405) 275-9780

Midwest Bluegrass Festival, Aug 22-23, Citizen Potawatomi Powwow Campground. (405) 391-2338

STILLWATER

Eskimo Joe's 28th Anniversary Celebration July 14-19, 501 W Elm. (405) 377-0799

Krazy Daze July 17-19, Downtown. (405) 624-2921

Pioneer Senior Olympics Aug 21-24, Citywide. (405) 747-8080

TAHLEQUAH

Cherokee Heritage Center 2 Miles South of Tahlequah on Hwy 62. July 12, Indian Arts Appraisal Day. Aug 29-31, Nat'l Holiday. (918) 456-6007

Illinois River Balloonfest Aug 15-16, Municipal Airport. (918) 453-9958

Untitled

A full moon
Mercury glass
Shimmering River Cimarron
Slow, sandy
Aged laughter echoes
Picnics, hooking catfish

An indigo sky
Soft, brushed flannel
Horizon silhouettes
Windmills, elevators, oaks
Horses doze
Behind barbed wire

A time whisper
This rusty
Unchanging moment
The liquid depth
Solace
Solitude searchers seek

—Kristi Lockhart

Kristi Lockhart lives in Watonga with her husband Ryan.

TULSA

Fairgrounds 4145 E 21st St. July 2-6, Tulsa Holiday Circuit Quarter Horse Show. July 10-18, Palomino World Show. July 11-13, Hunting & Fishing Show. July 18-20, An Affair of the Heart. July 19-20, Eastern Oklahoma Woodcarving Show. Aug 8-10, American Miniature Horse Central Championship Show. Aug 8-10, Powwow of Champions. Aug 16-17, Grand Nat'l Gun & Knife Show. Aug 21-24, Green Country RV Boat Show & Sale. Aug 29-31, Labor Day Super Circuit & Go for the Gold Auction Futurity. (918) 744-1113

Bell's Family Celebration July 4, 3901 E 21st St. (918) 744-1991

Tulsa Salutes Freedom July 4, River West Festival Park & Veterans Park. (918) 596-2001

Thank You Tulsa Day Aug 2, Tulsa Zoo. (918) 669-6612

Jazz on Greenwood Aug 7-9, Archer & Greenwood. (918) 587-3193

OUT & ABOUT

ADA Western Heritage Week, July 28-Aug 2, Citywide. (580) 332-2506

ALTUS Great Plains Stampede PRCA Rodeo, Aug 21-23, Rodeo Grounds. (580) 477-2222

ANTLERS Hotter 'n Hell Tournament, Aug 9, Antlers Springs Golf Course. (580) 298-9900

ARCADIA Festival & Rodeo, Aug 29-31, Citywide. (405) 396-2899

ARDMORE Fourth of July Activities, July 4, Lake Murray State Park. (580) 223-6600

ATOKA Trail Riders IPRA Rodeo, July 24-26, Hwy 3 East. (580) 889-7421

BETHANY Family Fun Festival, July 4, Eldon Lyon Park. (405) 789-1256

BETHANY Okie Derby, Aug 15-16, Wiley Post Airport. (405) 840-1156

BLACKWELL Fourth of July Celebration, July 4, Downtown & Fairgrounds. (580) 363-4195

BRAGGS Greenleaf State Park 3 Miles South of Hwy 10. July 4-6, Fourth of July Celebration. Aug 29-31, End of Summer Party. (918) 487-7125

BROKEN ARROW Gateway Balloon Festival, Aug 1-3, Northeastern State University Campus. (918) 259-0587

BUFFALO Stampede Days, July 11-14, Fairgrounds. (580) 735-2881

CATOOSA Liberty Fest, July 4, Rogers Point Park. (918) 266-2505

CHECOTAH Honey Springs Battlefield 1863 Honey Springs Battlefield Rd. July 18, 5K Run & 1 Mile Fun Run. July 19, Honey Springs Memorial Service. (918) 473-5572

CHEYENNE Junior Rodeo, Aug 16, Rodeo Grounds. (580) 983-2734

CLEARVIEW Open Rodeo, Aug 2-3, Memorial Area. (405) 786-2439

CLEVELAND Freedom Celebration, July 5, Feyodi Park. (918) 358-2131

COLCORD Hot Dog & Watermelon Feast, Aug 11, City Park. (918) 326-4301

COLLINSVILLE Tri-County Fair, Aug 20-23, Downtown. (918) 371-5652

COOKSON Jubilee, July 11-12, TACO Building. (918) 457-4390

CORN Bible Anniversary Celebration, Aug 29-31, Citywide. (580) 343-2262

COWETA Christmas in July, July 11-19, Downtown. (918) 486-2748

CUSHING PRCA Rodeo, July 11-12, Fairgrounds. (918) 225-2400

DAVIS Summerfest, July 4-5, Football Field & Downtown. (580) 369-2402

DEWEY Free Fair Aug 18-23, Washington County Fairgrounds. (918) 534-2600

DURANT American Legion Baseball Tournament, July 3-6, Loyd Plyler Park. (580) 924-1418

FAIRVIEW Nat'l John Deere Two-Cylinder Tractor Expo, July 18-19, Hwy 58 East. (580) 822-4813

FORT TOWSON Fireworks Display, July 4, Raymond Gary State Park. (580) 873-2442

FOSS Christmas in July Festival, July 11-12, Foss State Park. (580) 592-4433

FREDERICK Celebration 2003, July 4, Lake Frederick. (580) 335-2126

FREEDOM 66th Annual Freedom Rodeo & Old Cowhand Reunion, Aug 14-16, Rhodes Arena. (580) 621-3276

FREEDOM Alabaster Caverns Golden Days, Aug 30, Alabaster Caverns State Park. (580) 621-3381

GRANDFIELD Western Days, Aug 1-2, Downtown & Rodeo Arena. (580) 479-5230

GROVE Arts, Crafts, and Cajun Festival, July 4-5, Civic Center. (918) 786-8896

GROVE Grand Lake o' the Cherokees Quilt Show, July 4-6, Community Center. (918) 787-4334

HARTSHORNE Round-Up Club Rodeo, July 3-5, South 14th St. (918) 297-3448

HEALDTON Fireworks, July 4, Horton Field. (580) 229-0900

HEALDTON Old-Timers Breakfast, Aug 23, Anthis Park. (580) 229-0900

HINTON Kiwanis Rodeo, July 3-5, Kiwanis Arena. (405) 542-6643

HINTON District Fair, Aug 21-23, Fairgrounds. (405) 542-3211

HOBART Farmers Market, July 1, Courthouse Square. (580) 726-2553

HOBART Crazy Days, July 5, Downtown. (580) 726-2553

HOLDENVILLE Independence Day Celebration, July 4, Holdenville Lake. (405) 379-6675

HOLLIS Harmon County Black-Eyed Pea Festival, Aug 9, Downtown. (580) 688-9545

HUGO Grant's Bluegrass Festival, Aug 6-9, Salt Creek Park. (580) 326-5598

JAY Courthouse Square July 4-6, 36th Annual Nat'l Huckleberry Festival. (918) 253-8698. Aug 9, Cruise Night. (918) 253-4307

JENKS Old-Fashioned Family Fun Fourth of July, July 4, Main Street. (918) 299-5005

KETCHUM Duck Creek Fireworks, July 4, Arrowhead Yacht Club. (918) 782-3292

LAVERNE Fourth of July Celebration, July 4, City Park. (580) 921-3612

LAWTON Rangers Rodeo, Aug 6-9, LO Ranch Arena. (580) 585-0595

MANGUM Antique Car Show, Aug 9, Courthouse Lawn. (580) 782-2444

MARLOW Old-Fashioned Celebration, July 4, Redbud Park. (580) 658-2212

McLOUD Blackberry Festival, July 3-5, Veterans Park. (405) 964-6566

MIAMI Ottawa Celebration & Powwow, Aug 29-31, Adawe Park. (918) 674-2553

MIDWEST CITY Star Spangled Salute, July 4, Tinker Air Force Base. (405) 739-1293

MIDWEST CITY State Chili Championship, July 12, Joe B. Barnes Regional Park. (405) 739-1293

MOORE Celebration in the Heartland, July 4, Buck Thomas Park. (405) 739-5090

OKEMAH Woody Guthrie Folk Festival, July 9-13, Pastures of Plenty. (918) 623-2440

PAULS VALLEY Seed Spitting Contest & Fireworks Display, July 4, Wacker Park. (405) 238-7511

PAWHUSKA Cavalcade Street Dance, July 14, Downtown. (918) 287-1208

PAWHUSKA International Cavalcade, July 16-20, Fairgrounds. (918) 846-2880

PORTER Peach Festival, July 18-19, Main Street. (918) 483-4600

POTEAU Celebration, July 4, Downtown. (918) 647-9178

PRAGUE Celebration, July 4, City Park. (405) 567-2616

PURCELL Heart of Oklahoma, July 4, City Lake. (405) 527-7128

RENTIESVILLE Dusk 'Til Dawn Blues Festival, Aug 29-31, Down Home Blues Club. (918) 473-2411

RUSH SPRINGS Watermelon Festival, Aug 9, Jeff Davis Park. (580) 476-3103

SAPULPA Freedom Festival, July 4, Kelly Lane Park. (918) 224-3330

SAPULPA Concert on the Corner, July 24, Aug 28, Martha's Corner. (918) 224-5709

SEMINOLE 33rd Annual Gospel Sing, Aug 13-16, Music Park. (405) 382-8351

SPENCER Ice Cream Social & Open House, Aug 23, 50th & Palmer. (405) 771-4576

SPIRO Bluegrass Jamboree, July 12, School Cafetorium. (918) 962-2276

STROUD Sac & Fox Nation Powwow, July 10-13, Tribal Reserve. (918) 968-3526

TISHOMINGO Celebration, July 4, Citywide. (580) 371-2175

TONKAWA Independence Day Celebration, July 4, Blinn Park. (580) 628-2220

TUTTLE Annual Ice Cream Festival, July 4, Schrock Park. (405) 381-4600

VIAN Labor Day Festivities, Aug 29-31, Tenkiller State Park. (918) 489-5641

VINITA Summer Fest Car Show, Aug 2, South Park. (918) 256-7133

VINITA Will Rogers Memorial Rodeo, Aug 26-30, Rodeo Grounds. (918) 256-7133

WAGONER Fiddlers Festival, Aug 14-16, Western Hills Guest Ranch. (918) 772-2545

WAYNOKA Paint the Wall, Aug 30, Café Bahnhof. (580) 824-0063

WEATHERFORD Independence Day Celebration, July 4, Rader Park. (580) 772-7744

WILBURTON Sunset Hayride, Aug 30, Robbers Cave State Park. (918) 465-3831

WISTER Lake Wister State Park Route 3, Box 70. July 19, Team Gar Bow Bender Tournament. Aug 16, Gar Rodeo. (918) 655-7886

WOODWARD Plains Indians & Pioneers Museum 2009 Williams Ave. July 5-Aug 16, I Love a Parade Photo Exhibit. July 19, Cheyenne-Arapaho Dancers. (580) 256-6136

YUKON Freedom Fest '03, City Park & Chisholm Trail Park. (405) 354-7208

Visit oklahomatoday.com or travelok.com for more listings.

Dates and times are subject to change; please confirm before attending any event. The Events Guide is a free service published on a space-available basis. To be considered, please mail a notice of the event that includes date, place, address, and both a contact telephone number and a phone number that can be published. Notices must arrive at Oklahoma Today three calendar months prior to publication (i.e. November/December 2003 events must arrive by August 1). Events Guide, Oklahoma Today, 15 North Robinson, Suite 100, Oklahoma City, OK 73102. Fax: (405) 522-4588. Email: eventsguide@oklahomatoday.com. We cannot take listings over the telephone.

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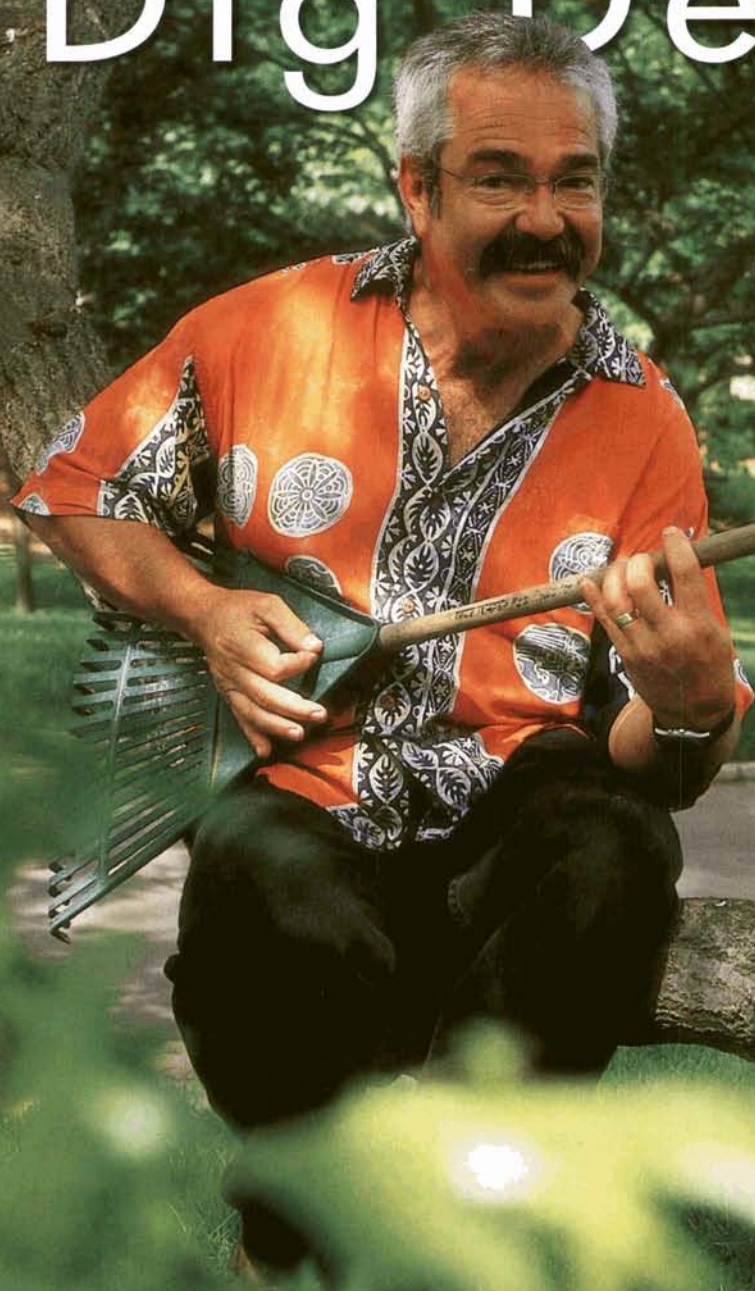
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Bob & Anna Welcome You!

Dig Deep



A self-described 'ham at heart,' Paul James was a freelance corporate communications writer for thirteen years before venturing into public gardening.

JIMMY GREGORY

EIGHT YEARS AGO, TULSAN PAUL JAMES SOWED A wild seed with the producers of a budding cable network called Home & Garden Television (HGTV). His idea? To produce a show that would "strip away pretense and appeal to homeowners who would rather play golf than work in their garden."

In the vast compost tumbler of reality TV, James' idea spun black gold. The result is *Gardening by the Yard*, a weekly half-hour program written and directed by James that transforms his two-acre mid-Tulsa backyard into a film set for twenty-six episodes per year.

"Part of my pitch to HGTV was to film the show at my house and feature gardening successes as well as failures," he says of the show's regular-Joe orientation.

Blossom or wilt, the shows are never contrived, which can make for some impromptu moments on camera.

"We have a motto in gardening television," James says. "If you can't fix it, feature it." That's reality—and part of what makes James' program popular to viewers in more than 100 million homes around the world.

Whatever the show's topic, it's popular. Gary Dempsey, an Oklahoma City fan, says, "I mean, that guy can make compost interesting."
—Mary Logan Wolf

Gardening by the Yard airs Saturdays and Sundays at 10:30 a.m. on HGTV. hgtv.com.



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